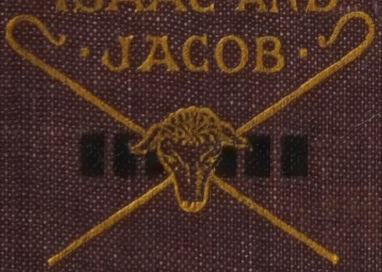
LIFE AND TIMES OF THE PATRIARCHS

ABRAHAM ISAAC AND JACOB



WILLIAM HANNA THOMSON

To John Lucas
from
Dr. Althaff.

LIFE AND TIMES OF THE PATRIARCHS, ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

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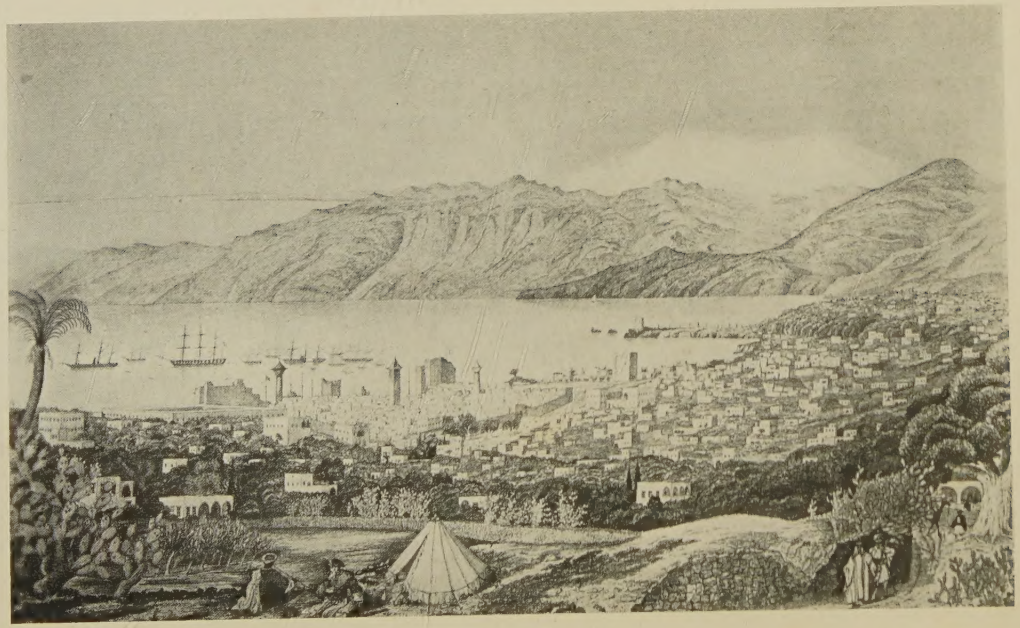

MT. LEBANON FROM THE CITY OF BEIRUT
Drawn by W. H. Thomson in 1856

LIFE and TIMES of the PATRIARCHS, ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB

BEING A SUPPLEMENT TO
"THE LAND AND THE BOOK"

BY

WILLIAM HANNA THOMSON, M.D., LL.D.
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FURNISHED BY THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE

I have chosen to call this book "Life and Times of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and to add that it is "a Supplement to 'The Land and the Book,'" which has been the widely read production of my father, the Rev. William McClure Thomson, D.D.

The present volume is based on my own personal experiences while traveling with my father. But as he did not allude in any detail to the events connected with those journeys, my own production will then serve as a supplement to his work.

In its present form this book is made up of articles furnished to the *Designer* magazine at the request of my friend, Mr. George B. Baker, the editor, to whom I am indebted for permission so to publish them.

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Introductory

THE BOOK OF GENESIS AS LITERATURE

THE BOOK OF GENESIS AS LITERATURE

Regarded from a literary point of view the book of Genesis is virtually the memoirs of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the first twelve of its fifty chapters being an introduction, as we would term it, to the story of the patriarchs. This story surpasses any other in literature for the minuteness of its geographical details. The names of small towns and their relative position to each other continually occur, such as "Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem unto the oak of Moreh" (R.V.). The reference to the oaks of a place is exclusively Palestinian, as any one who has seen these giant single oaks can testify. The

next sentence reads: "And he moved from thence to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east." And so it is all through the book, as any one who would study this characteristic of the narrative will discover.

Such a feature would be wholly unnecessary in a mythical or imaginary story. Romances are never burdened with geographical items, nor with points of the compass. But there is far more to this than romance. It would be beyond human invention to represent the ordinary acts of persons living nearly 4,000 years ago, how they stood, walked, bowed, sat, ate, drank, bought and sold, talked or gestured. But this is just what we find in Genesis, and told in such a way that life in Palestine now confirms it all down to the minutest details. The work of my father, entitled "The Land and the

Book," published fifty-two years ago, owed its wide sale to its innumerable illustrations of the Bible being the most natural of all books in its correspondence to human lives and places.

Chapter I

A TRIP TO JAULAN

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A TRIP TO JAULAN

Once, just after my college days, my father was in the town of Hasbeiya, in Mount Hermon, when an incident occurred which took us at once back to the times of Abraham. My father had long sought an opportunity to visit and to explore the region of ancient Bashan east of the Jordan, but the whole district was in the hands of different Bedouin tribes, and any stranger found in it would be at once stript of everything, including his clothes, which would be highly inconvenient in such a wild district.

One day a Druse sheik called on us, and upon my father's mentioning his wish to travel along the east of the

Jordan, he said: "I can introduce you there, and you would be as safe as in your own home. My great-grandfather made a Brotherhood Compact with the great-grandfather of the present Emir of the Fadal Arabs, a tribe whose camps extend all the way from the Jordan to the Euphrates. Now, I have never myself visited my brother, the Emir, nor has he visited me, and therefore I can take this opportunity to go to his encampment, and you can go along."

These Brotherhood Compacts date from time immemorial, and are formed between prominent men with very solemn ceremonies. A great crowd is present to enjoy the feast of the occasion, when seven sheep are slaughtered and their blood collected into a large basin. The two men then stand up and clasp their hands, whereupon the oldest sheik of the community solemnly pours the blood of the

sheep over their clasped hands with the words: "Whoever of us, or of our descendants, breaks this covenant, let his blood be poured on the ground like this." This compact stipulates that whenever either of the parties is in straits he can call upon his brother to help him with all the power he can command. It also stipulates that when either of the parties visits the other, he and his retinue shall be royally entertained.

Now it will be recalled that one day Abraham received the news that his nephew Lot with his family had been captured and carried away captive by the army of Chedorlaomer. Abraham at once equipped his 318 trained servants, a body of men, the nature of which we will soon describe, and then called upon Aner, Mamre and Eshcol, three Canaanite chiefs with whom he had become confederate, and they furnished their contingent to

Abraham's troop. Doubtless the whole force numbered considerably over one thousand men. With this body Abraham made a night attack on Chedorlaomer's army.

It should be remembered that all through ancient history Oriental armies had no sentinels, and thus, in the Bible, King Saul when he was pursuing David slept without any guard, so that David stole up to where the king lay asleep and took the cruse of water at his head with him. (I Sam. 26.) A striking illustration of this was when Alexander the Great, accompanied by his chief officers, entered the lines of the Persian army the night before the decisive battle of Arbela, and found that there was not one of the sleeping host who observed them. We can readily see, therefore, that a panic might occur by a sudden night attack on an army so carelessly guarded, and that

Abraham's company might easily have taken advantage of this.

According to appointment, we started on a bright morning in April from the foot of Mount Hermon to ascend the long slopes of the mountains rising on the east of the Jordan, where we should traverse the region now called the Jaulan, or ancient Gaulanitis.

It should be noted that the valley of the Jordan constitutes the deepest depression on the face of the earth, the Sea of Galilee itself being over 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, while the Dead Sea is over 1,300 feet below the level of all the oceans of the world. The Jaulan is a very diversified tableland at an elevation of from 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the valley of the Jordan, consisting of a volcanic plateau with here and there cones of extinct volcanoes rising from the level. At one

time we suddenly came upon an extinct crater, whose sides were so steep that the bottom was strewn with the bones of animals that had fallen into it. Nothing could exceed the picturesqueness of this apparently deserted country.

Every little while a sparkling stream of water descended the gentle valleys, later to enter on its way to the savage Jordan gorges with basaltic precipices like our Western cañons. The whole surface of the country and the sides of the valleys were covered with an amazing profusion of flowers of every tint and hue, while the air was literally filled with flocks of wild geese, every conceivable kind of wild ducks and other water-fowl. We should remember that Syria is the wintering ground of the birds of northern Europe and northern Asia, but in April they meet, on the other hand, an innumerable host of quails marching, not

flying, up from Africa, and which I myself have seen in numbers that would amply feed the camp of the Israelites, as detailed in Exodus 16: 13. Besides waterfowl, however, every bush was alive with singing birds of kinds too numerous to mention. In fact, the whole district explained why the tribes of Reuben and of Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh asked Moses to allow them to settle on that side of the Jordan because they had much cattle. So here, herds of cattle, horses and camels and unnumbered flocks of sheep and goats appeared over the wide expanse the whole day that we were traversing it. Meanwhile we noticed on every low hilltop a solitary Bedouin horseman with his long spear. These correspond to Abraham's trained servants, their sole business being to watch the possessions of their master and be ready to resist the raids of hostile tribes.

Shortly after noon our cavalcade made a detour which at first I did not understand, but the reason was that we were approaching the camp of the Emir himself, and it was requisite that we should come up straight to his tent and not pass any other Bedouin's tent, because, according to custom, its owner could then come out and claim us as his guests, while we did not wish to be the guests of any one but the Emir himself.

The Emir's tent was typical of its kind and would cover about an acre, being composed of great carpets woven from camel's-hair and stretched from pole to pole. As we dismounted, the Emir himself came out to meet us, asking whether we would do the honor to our humble servant of entering his tent. He was a young man, drest very simply like any other Bedouin, except that he had a long chain of black coral beads,

which are very expensive and which reached nearly to his feet. This Emir was rather noted as a simple-minded man, so that he had the nickname of "tongue-tied" among the Arabs. By his side stood a tall, rather old black negro, with anything but a comely appearance, but whose fame had long reached us. His name was Dahook, and he was the head and hereditary slave in the Emir's family, who virtually managed the entire affairs of the tribe. As an example of his sharp tongue, it was told me that on one occasion the Turkish Government, with its consistent policy of setting one tribe against the other, had bribed the Emir of the great Benu Sakhr tribe to pay a visit to the Emir of the Fadal Arabs for the purpose of picking a quarrel with them; but when they had partaken of the customary meal and began to talk business, the Benu Sakhr

Emir found, to his great inconvenience, that all the talking was done by Dahook.

The Benu Sakhr Emir then turned to his retinue and said: "Surely has Allah blest this tribe, whose servant is its master!"

"Yes," quickly retorted Dahook, "Allah has indeed blest this tribe, for its servant is better than the master of any other tribe."

We soon found that Dahook was conversant with all the politics of Syria and of Europe, and he asked many questions about the pending war in the Crimea between the Russians and the French and English armies. In fact, we saw in this head slave a fit representative of that Eliezer of Damascus whom Abraham regarded as his heir if he had no son, and to whom Abraham afterward committed the task of going to Mesopotamia to fetch Rebecca for Isaac.

We were first asked to take little stools instead of sitting on the mats, as all Arabs do, but our feet so soon fell fast asleep on these stools that we asked to discard them and squat with the rest. Then a closely-woven mat was brought in, followed by the body of a sheep which had been cooked in a closed oven until its flesh was very tender. The sheep was then literally buried out of sight by piles of boiled rice, and then upon this was poured the fermented milk of the country. The Emir stood while we sat around the feast as his guests.* The Arabs then stretched forth their bare arms and dove into the savory pile, then rolled up the rice, milk and meat in balls and dexterously pitched them into their open mouths, but when I tried this maneuver myself I failed so lamentably that our servants were requested to bring

* As Abraham did on such occasions.

us plates with knives and forks. After the first row of banqueters were sated they arose and the second line took their place, and so on until everything eatable disappeared, and then the little cups of coffee were brought in, of which we partook with the customary salutations.

As the sun was setting I walked to the top of the hill overlooking the encampment, and then from every direction I could see long lines of camels, mares, cattle, flocks of sheep and goats, coming over the wide expanse toward the camp, led by their shepherds and escorted by the mounted horsemen. In the camp the calves and ewes were kept in small enclosures, and the constant lowing of the cows, bleating of the sheep and neighing of the horses which were tethered beside a blazing fire before each tent, with the tall, tufted Bedouin spears stuck in the ground beside them, gave as bustling and

animated a scene of pastoral life as could well be imagined, and led me to remember many a line of Arabic poetry alluding to the picturesque scenes of life in the desert.

Chapter II

ATTACKED BY BEDOUIN ROBBERS

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Whoever comes up on the deck of a ship at anchor in the harbor is apt to think that everything on shore has swung around, if meanwhile the ship itself has turned its bow to the wind or tide; so when we arose in the morning at this Bedouin camp, it appeared as if the entire encampment had shifted its points of the compass. The reason was that the whole side of a Bedouin tent is opened by a removal of the carpet curtain on the east side in the afternoon, because that will be the shady side, and then is reversed in the morning.

In Gen. 18: 1-5 (R. V.) we read: "And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in

the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, 'My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on: forasmuch as ye are come to your servant.' "

From a natural mistake I have seen pictured in religious primers Abraham on this occasion sitting in the door of a small conical tent like ours, whereas every Arab knows that what was meant by the door was this open side of the tent.

Shortly after our early meal, we bade farewell to the Emir and Dahook and our

kind Druse escort, and started for another and a long day's ride with a mounted guide furnished by the Emir.

During this ride we passed a number of encampments, all belonging to the Fadal Arabs, and each with its herds and flocks.

Just as we started a young girl ran ahead of us driving a donkey, laden, as we found out, with her trousseau. She was the daughter of our guide and he was taking advantage of this opportunity to escort her to the tent of her bridegroom, whom, by the way, she had never yet seen.

I mention this incident to explain the sending of Hagar away with her son from Abraham's encampment, because, as that narrative reads in our version, Gen. 21:14, it would appear as a heartless procedure on Abraham's part. Every Arab, however, understands at once that

Abraham for the purpose of quiet did not send her with an escort, but instead she was going to some one of Abraham's many encampments, which thereafter should be hers. The subsequent history showed that Abraham's son Ishmael received a large portion of his father's property, and therefore was enabled soon to take a high position among the roving Arab tribes, which were the sons of Joktan (Gen. 10: 25-30) and who preceded Abraham. The Arabs to this day, accordingly, divide themselves into the original Arabs, descendants of Joktan, and what they call the "naturalized" Arabs, who are descendants of Ishmael. Our Emir of the Fadal Arabs traces his descent from Ishmael through Mohammed. What happened to Hagar was that she evidently lost her way while going to what was to be her own encampment.

There is, however, to be inferred fro

this passage that there was to be a difference between Isaac the son of Sarah who inherited the covenant of Abraham, namely: that in him and in his seed should all the nations and families of the earth be blest, while Ishmael was to be in no sense a partaker of this divine heritage. It is interesting to note that all Mohammedans, who as such highly revere Abraham, never mention Isaac, but speak only of Ishmael as Abraham's son. It was prophesied that Ishmael's hand should be against every man and every man's hand against him, and as Dean Milman fitly says: "The religion of Mohammed declares war against all mankind." In keeping with this fact it is significant that Arab geographers divide the world into Dar-elislam, or, as we would term it, Islamdom, and Dar-elharb, or the region of the Enemy. There can never be peace in a purely

Mohammedan country, as Morocco and Afghanistan now show.

Toward the close of our long day's ride our course turned toward the Valley of the Jordan, until, near sunset, we found ourselves on the brink of a high precipice. Looking down the gorge, however, almost at our feet, was a beautiful little plain surrounded by basaltic cliffs. On this plain was a Bedouin encampment, and our guide dismounted, and told us that we had to do the same, and lead our horses down a breakneck path alongside a dashing little brook.

In time we reached the encampment, and were met by a tall, majestic-looking sheik, whom I had long heard of as the truly righteous man of that region. Our subsequent conversation with him deeply imprest us with his simplicity and his strong faith in God as his protector. His only tribe consisted of this small en-

campment and had no connection with any other Arab tribe, many of whom are inveterate thieves and robbers, but all of whom hold this Sheik Fraij in veneration. I do not know that I have ever been more imprest than with the native dignity and at the same time rectitude of conduct shown by this simple Bedouin chief. He even spoke mildly of the Turkish Government which tried to take advantage of his small following to oppress him, but which soon found that every Bedouin tribe was ready to come to his assistance.

After a pleasant night spent at his encampment, he gave us a guide to conduct us on our rough way down to the Lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, a glimpse of whose waters we saw far below.

After a long and difficult descent we found ourselves at the shore, which is but a short distance from the steep

mountains that here come very near the lake. Seeing a small ruin on one side we asked the guide what its name was, and were delighted to hear him answer "Girsa," for this at once identified it with the Girgasa which was the scene where our Lord, crossing over to the country of the Girgasenes, met the maniac. (Matt. 8: 28, A. V.) There were the rocks and there were the caves among which this maniac wandered.

Being very thirsty, I saw what looked like a beautiful spring close to the water's edge. Dismounting to drink of it, it proved to have an intolerable sulfurous smell, and we could see that the bottom of the lake for some distance was covered with sulfur from similar springs. Just then my father called to me to get on my horse, because over a clump of great flowering oleanders some twenty feet high appeared what seemed like a little forest

THE GORGE OF GIRGASA, WITH THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS IN THE DISTANCE
Drawn by W. H. Thomson in 1855

of Bedouin spears. In another instant we were surrounded by Bedouins with their *keffeyah* or head kerchiefs tied across their faces, which showed that they were on a raid. They instantly pulled me off my horse and commenced to strip me and the baggage of the rest of our party right and left. Just then our guide, who had followed us on foot, ran up and exclaimed: "These men were the guests of Sheik Fraij last night!" With general cursing and swearing the Bedouins dropt everything on hearing this statement, and in another moment were gone.

Mounting our horses again after we had pulled ourselves together, we rode on for about half an hour along the shores of the lake, and then came to the encampment of these very fellows, who came out and most graciously invited us to come in and share their hospitality.

When we were seated in the tent of

their chief, they soon brought in some bowls of a very savory mixture of honey and their native butter, with their kind of bread. This was the highest mark of consideration they could give. The reader may now turn to Isaiah 7: 14 (R. V.): "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good." For this was the food of a princely-born child.

Having partaken of the hospitality of these predatory Bedouins, which itself constituted our protection while in their neighborhood, we started for the place where the Jordan flows out of the Lake of Tiberias as the end of this day's journey.

Our hosts gave us a ceremonious farewell and furnished us with a guide who

was a typical Bedouin horseman, whom we found very talkative and who soon volunteered to act as our guide to the great ruins of Gadara up in the mountains of Bashan. He remarked that he would be very useful there because that region was full of Bedouin robbers. I asked him if robbers abounded throughout the whole district, whereupon he replied: "Of course, for I am a robber and so all my fathers have been robbers. You wouldn't take me for a plowman, would you?" I once heard a Bedouin woman introduce herself to Dr. Van Dyck at our Mission Dispensary as "the daughter of the greatest robber in the Hauran." It should be remembered that in every Mohammedan country robbers are held in high esteem, because Mohammed himself was a typical highwayman and a murderous robber to the end of his days. When one re-

flects how founders of every religion are revered by their followers, we can easily imagine the contrast between those who venerate Jesus, the man of peace, and those whose life pattern was a bloody freebooter, as Mohammed was. On that account, even in the palmiest days of Arab supremacy, no travelers could pass from one city to another except in caravans with their armed guards.

On our way we passed through what might be called a thicket of mustard trees. It should be noted that the mustard seed contains a larger proportion of sulfur than the seed of any other plant, but nowhere in the world does the mustard plant attain such size as it does along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, on account of its very rich soil and its abundance of sulfur, as we have had occasion to note in our previous chapter. This particular clump of mustard plants

was as high as our heads as we rode through it on horseback, and it was full of hundreds of twittering and singing goldfinches, which feed upon the seeds. Now, there is nothing irritating in the seed itself, because the activity of powdered mustard is brought out only by the addition of water, and therefore these little birds could feed upon the seeds with impunity. This explains the parable which was uttered on this very shore of the Sea of Galilee in Matt. 13: 31 (R. V.). "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof." This parable refers to the external growth of the Kingdom in the world, and was strikingly fulfilled when the political

power of a united Christendom was first shown at the terrible battle of Chalons, A.D. 451, in which the slain were estimated at 300,000, when the combined armies of Roman and Christianized Goths overthrew the pagan hosts of Attila. Never since that day has any combination of non-Christian powers been able to meet even a partial alliance between the nations of Christendom.

Chapter III

THE FAIR PLAIN OF GENNESARET

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It may be well, to enable the reader to picture to himself the Lake of Tiberias and the relative positions of its different localities as they are mentioned in the New Testament, to say that this lake is just about the size and shape of New York Harbor. The outlet of the Jordan, then, would correspond with the Narrows, and Staten Island stretching from the Narrows to the Kill van Kull would correspond to the shore on which the town of Tiberias is located. The difference would be that the mountains steeply rise above Tiberias to the height of about two thousand feet. Tiberias is now the only town on the lake and has some five

thousand inhabitants. It is greatly venerated by the Jews as the seat, for centuries, of their great rabbinical schools. Many Jewish rabbis come from distant Russia to die and to be buried in its sacred soil.

Proceeding from Tiberias along a low but rocky shore, meeting with many hot springs on the way, but never seeing a sail or a boat on the lake, the traveler comes to a gorge with lofty precipices entering from the west. In these precipices are a number of fortified caves, which were the strongholds of robbers in the time of our Lord. Those robbers Josephus describes as having been finally dislodged by Roman soldiers, who were let down in boxes from the top of the precipice. Considering the dreadful oppression to which the common people were subjected under Roman rule, one can not doubt but that many of these

robbers took to the road from very justifiable anger at the cruel rule of such governors as Felix. I have, therefore, often thought that the penitent thief on the cross may not have had the mind of a wicked robber.

At the mouth of this gorge is the only village on the lake. Its houses are the most miserable hovels, but it goes by the name of Mejdel, and is no less than the town of Mary Magdalene. When I last passed it the women of the place were standing on the flat roofs of their houses indulging in a general row, with much cursing and swearing.

From Mejdel the mountains recede from the lake, and we now come to the far-famed plain of Gennesaret, probably the most fertile spot on earth. The plain is some fifteen miles in length and averages from two to four miles in width. Josephus exhausts all his vocabulary in

describing the wonderful fertility of this plain. It is now nothing but a bare waste, covered in the spring with the densest carpet of beautiful flowers, among which my father found the splendid Huleh lily. When Sir Joseph Hooker of the Kew Gardens acknowledged the receipt of some bulbs of this lily from my father, he declared it to be the most beautiful lily in the world. No wonder our Lord could say of it that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

As we depended largely on my gun for providing our evening meal, I dismounted to take a shot at an immense flock of blue rock pigeons picking up the seeds on the plain. As soon as I fired the whole flock rose, and circling rapidly up in the air, flew until they reached the caves of the robbers, just mentioned. This naturally suggested to us the words of the Psalmist: "In Jehovah do I take refuge. How say

ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" (Ps. 11: 1, R. V.)

This plain would correspond in its location on the lake to the flats from Bergen Point to Jersey City. At the upper end of the plain the hills return to the lake in the form of low, stony ridges, and here is what I consider to be one of the most interesting spots mentioned in the Bible. A small, rocky cove enters from the lake, in the center of which I think that our Savior sat in a boat while He delivered those wonderful parables given in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, because the assembled multitude could have stood around its steep shores and readily heard Him while He spoke. Anywhere else along the flat shore of Gennesaret only the front rank in the crowd could have listened to Him.

Just beyond this, on the east, are some shapeless ruins whose name identifies

them with Capernaum. This situation would correspond to the location of Jersey City in New York Harbor. Further on the Jordan flows into the lake, and on its eastern banks are the small ruins of Bethsaida, corresponding to the most southern point of New York City. Beyond the Jordan, corresponding to the site of Brooklyn, is the well-nigh unbroken mountainous range on the eastern side of the Lake of Tiberias, cleft with many a gorge such as we have described in the previous chapter.

After these geographical details, it may be well to take a glance at the relations of the Book of Genesis to ancient history, and to do so we may instance the narrative given in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis.

It was a settled principle of the higher critics of the days of Voltaire and Volney that no historical statement in the Bible

was to be credited unless it was confirmed by Greek or Roman writers. In particular the fourteenth chapter of Genesis was ridiculed. This chapter represented Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, as ruler over all Mesopotamia, including Nineveh and Babylon, whose empire extended to the Mediterranean, so that Palestinian chiefs were tributary to him. As no Greek or Roman historian had ever heard of such an Elamite empire, and as elsewhere in the Bible itself the references to Elam are very scanty, this chapter was regarded as a pure myth, invented for the purpose of glorifying the legendary Jewish hero Abraham.

At present, however, this chapter in Genesis is acknowledged by all scholars of every shade of belief as the most important fragment of ancient history in the world, as well as settling conclusively when it was that Abraham lived. The

first discovery—which came to the learned world as a shock—was a long inscription by King Asshurbanipal, about the year 642 B.C., found in a buried palace in Nineveh. In this Asshurbanipal gives full details of his war with the King of Elam, when he captured his capital city Susa, and among other trophies brought back the images of the gods of Nineveh, which Cudur Nakunta, King of Elam, had taken when he captured Nineveh one thousand six hundred and twenty-eight years before (that is, before 642 B.C.). Soon after, further discoveries showed that Elam was the most ancient of conquering powers, before either Nineveh or Babylon became such, and in particular that it was ruled by a dynasty of nine successive kings, each of whom bore the title prefix Cudur or Chedor, the last being Cudur Lagumer, or Chedorlaomer. In addition the tablets of Arioch King of

Ellaser have been found, in which he states that he was a son-in-law of Chedorlaomer. But above all, Amraphel, King of Shinar, turns out to be no less than Hammarubi, the first king of the dynasty which delivered Babylon from the yoke of Elam, B.C. 1900 years. Hammarubi's laws have been deciphered and, as usual, it is claimed that Moses was, in his laws, a mere copyist of this Babylonian king.

By the side of this example in Genesis of the correspondence of the Bible with the actual facts of ancient history, let us contrast history as it was written by the Greeks. For this purpose we need only refer to their account of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, who held much the same political relations to them that Napoleon the Great did to England. Herodotus, after giving a long list of fables about the birth of Cyrus, details his wide conquests until, he says,

Cyrus came to his end by invading the country of the Scythians, who were ruled by a queen named Tomyris. This queen defeated him in battle, and cutting off his head, had it put in a skin filled with human blood, bitterly saying that he might thus slake his thirst for gore. Xenophon, on the other hand, wrote a memoir of Cyrus, who, according to him, died peacefully in his palace, surrounded by his counselors, to whom he had delivered a long speech of wise advice. Meanwhile, Ctesias, another Greek historian, gives a totally different account from either of these narrators. As a parallel instance, we might imagine a writer two thousand years hence telling his readers that, as English historians are very discordant about the life and death of Napoleon, it is best to follow the statements of their greatest historian. This historian, after narrating how Na-

poleon fought the English in the Crimea, states that he then proceeded to invade America, which was peopled by warlike tribes of Hindus under their king, Andrew Jackson, who defeated and captured Napoleon, and put him to death at the instigation of his wife, whom these pagan Hindus regarded as a deity and erected temples to her honor under the name of Mother Eddy. This great queen, however, to show her respect for law, had Napoleon tried by the famous American judge named Lynch, who sentenced him to be hung from their king's favorite hickory tree.

In fact, at present, both Greek and Roman historians, wherever they speak of times preceding their own, are held in no estimation whatever.

The Greeks had no conception of where they came from, and therefore created mythical stories about their derivation

from renowned Phenicia and Egypt. No statement would therefore have been so scouted by them as that they were first cousins of their Persian enemies, which the Bible correctly represents them to be in Gen. 10:2. Among the sons of Japheth the Bible puts Javan (or Ionia) as the nearest brother to Madai or the Medes. It is from Iran, the original home of the Aryans, that the European races have come, as language testifies; for in modern Persian whole classes of words are virtually the same as they are in German, while others occur in Greek, and others again in Latin. Meanwhile, neither the Shemitic Phenician nor the Egyptian shows the least trace of any relationship to the Greeks. Shemitic names never became naturalized among Europeans until Christianity made them familiar. Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general, still remains Phenician, on

account of the last half of his name, which originally meant John Baal; for John in Shemitic languages means the friend or beloved one of, and hence survives in the Welsh Jones, Owens, Evans; the Gaelic and Russian Ian; or the feminine forms, Ann, Anne, Anna and Hannah.

Chapter IV

PSALMS XLII AND XLIII

Chapter IV

PSALMS XLII AND XLIII

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
These things I remember and pour out my soul within me,
How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.
Why art thou cast down O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him
For the health of his countenance.
O my God my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
And the Hermons from the hill Mizar.
Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts:
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness
in the daytime,
And in the night his song shall be with me,
Even a prayer unto the God of my life.
I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou for-
gotten me?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of
the enemy?
As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries
reproach me;
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy
God?
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my
God.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an
ungodly nation:
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
For thou art the God of my strength; why hast
thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of
the enemy?
O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead
me:
Let them bring me unto thy holy hill,
And to thy tabernacles.

Then will I go unto the altar of God,
Unto God my exceeding joy:
And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Scholars are agreed that this touching psalm was composed by one of the mourning captives while on the way to Babylon.

It was customary to take the northern route past the foot of Mount Hermon in the winter for the sake of water in the desert beyond, as the allusions in the psalm indicate.

"As the hart [gazelle] panteth after the water brooks" is an apt comparison to the psalmist's actual state, when no longer could he resort to the temple, because that edifice was now a smoking ruin

where the brutal heathen soldiers would kill him if he should approach its sacred site. Therefore he was like the thirsty gazelle which dares not come to the water brooks, because it well knows that lions or leopards are just there waiting for it. On one occasion I consented to hide in a stone enclosure by a solitary fountain which was the only place for a long distance where any water could be had. Soon we saw a gazelle on one of the mountain tops anxiously looking down at this spring. It then withdrew to a hill where it could have another view, and then to a third place for the same purpose to judge whether it would be safe to venture to descend and drink. As I thus saw its hesitation I said to my Arab companion, "Come away, I can not bear to shoot this beautiful creature in such a cowardly fashion!"

"These things I remember and pour

out my soul within me. How I went with the throng and led them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holy day."

Moses well knew how pilgrimages made deep and lasting impressions, and he therefore enjoined on his people that three times a year they should go up to the sacred place which the Lord should choose for His altar. Nothing like his first journey with father and mother to this shrine would leave such an undying impression on a boy's mind. It was thus when he was twelve years old that our Savior went with Joseph and Mary up to the temple at Jerusalem. But we are not left without the full picture of the inspiring scene as it is given in Ps. 118, when each great company of pilgrims approached the Mount of the Lord. This psalm was the national ode of Israel to be sung by the choir of Levites, and by

the whole congregation on their gathering at one of the great feasts appointed by Moses. Throughout this song there is a note of triumph in which the people of Israel speak like an individual recounting the deliverances by Jehovah from the enemies of His people, and which in varied and inspiring phrases continues down to verse 19. Then the lines represent the antiphonies which the singers and priests with their silver trumpets on the battlements of the Temple exchanged with the approaching throng of pilgrims, as these said (vs. 19):

"Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will enter into them. I will give thanks unto the Lord."

(Answer.) "This is the gate of the Lord. The righteous shall enter into it."

(Pilgrims.) "I will give thanks unto Thee, for Thou hast answered me, and art become my salvation. This is the day

which the Lord hath made. We will be glad and rejoice in it."

(Answer.) "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord." Then, on entering, the thundering chorus of all together, "Jehovah is God, and He hath given us light. Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto Thee. Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee. O, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever."

All this the psalmist now remembers, but how everything about him then seemed to make a note of triumph, mockery! Yet with each new grief as it comes up, he utters this sublime refrain. "Why art thou cast down O my soul. And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall

yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God!"

But another reminder of his sorrow now comes over him as he treads his way past Mount Hermon, and which I myself saw fully illustrated in that immediate neighborhood. We were descending a long mountain slope which commanded a wide view of the Mediterranean. For fully a hundred miles along the coast a great phalanx of clouds was approaching on a level with our own position. The sea underneath seemed of inky blackness. Suddenly at four different places, great moving lines like dark serpents shot down from the clouds to the water causing the deep to boil, and to send up a stream of white vapor on each side. Meanwhile vivid flashes of lightning darted from rank to rank of the approaching phalanx, whose peals of thunder echoed among the mountain

gorges. I never witnessed such a sublime scene, heightened by a strange stillness just around us as if all Nature were holding its breath. We had to dismount as our horses were trembling at the storms coming, and words can not describe how we ourselves dreaded lest we might be washed away when the cloud burst would break upon us. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." But he was referring to waves of heart-wringing sorrow. At this day the barbarity which was attendant on the scenes of ancient captivities is to us well-nigh inconceivable. Because little children would be inconvenient on the long march, the hardened soldiers would pick them up by the heels, and dash their heads against the rocks in the presence of their parents. It is certain that the psalmist himself saw such sights,

and not unlikely his own children were thus killed.

Now, the Bible is a very natural and truthful book, so when we read in the 137th psalm, "O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock!"

Was this expression unnatural? How can such words be found in our inspired Scriptures? some may ask. But if these same persons could witness this treatment of their own children, and then remain sane, they would be simply non-human if they did not feel just as these exiles did, and say so. The rules of systematic theology can not be used to cover all the events of human life.

But this psalmist had to experience another pang. To us in our own age it is almost unimaginable that our God

should be generally considered as a weak and insignificant deity. That He was a divinity was then denied by no one, but in a previous century His rank in the world was tersely exprest by Rabshakah, the general of the Assyrian monarch Sennachareb. (2 Kings, 18:32) "Hearken not unto Hezekiah when he persuadeth you saying, Jehovah will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath or of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?"

I have just been reading a large book on "The History of Sumer and Accad," by L. W. King, of the Department of Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum, which gives the story of the earliest civilizations in Mesopotamia, 2,500

years before the times of our psalmist. It is remarkable how many records and inscriptions we have of those remote ages, but there is a sameness throughout all their religious conceptions which may be defined as a universal belief that each city or country was ruled by its own special god or gods. When any city was captured the conquerors took the images of its gods in triumph to array them before their own chief divinity, much as in our times captured flags are preserved as mementos of victory. We have seen how Asshur-bani-pal prided himself on his capture of Susa because he then restored to Nineveh the images of its gods, which Kudur Nakhunta, King of Elam, had carried away 1,650 years before Asshur-bani-pal's time. The lapse of so many centuries had not lessened the disgrace felt in Nineveh at the failure of their gods to defend their own capital.

None of us can escape being influenced by the opinions of our fellows, and where such conceptions have prevailed in the world for scores of centuries, he would be an exceptional man who could rise above them. But among this psalmist's own countrymen there were multitudes, including many of their kings, who, like the rest of the world, did not believe that Jehovah was the only one and true God, the ruler of the whole earth, and therefore they were continually apostatizing to the worship of the triumphant heathen, so as to share in their gods' favor. It was on that account that the psalmist says, "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? In other words, What does your Jehovah amount to? Here we have destroyed Jerusalem, his own city, and burnt his own temple with fire, and now we are taking the Ark of

his Covenant and all his sacred vessels to set them before our mighty Merodach! All this but shows that your Jehovah is a sorry failure, and how can you poor captives deny it? Yet facing all this, the man in him, moved by the indwelling Spirit answers, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God!' "

He indeed explains to us why Israel doth abide. To all Israel's many and succeeding oppressors there now belongs one word—Gone. And with them all their gods are gone.

This psalm indeed shows how rational and true is that great doctrine of Justification by Faith. The universe of minds and of intelligent personalities is vaster and greater than the passing universe of Matter. But ruling both of these worlds is Law. To every mind in that, to us, now unseen universe, God must show how

he can be the justifier of the human sinner, and this psalmist now proves the wisdom of God in making human Faith a full justification. The question of questions in the next world will be what *kind* of being must be he who shall inherit eternal life? It is the shallowest of errors for men to confound faith with credulity, or with mere intellectual belief. Instead, faith is a deep heart preference, and as in this psalmist, it rises higher and higher as mere intellectual reasons sink lower and lower. What kind of being was he in the sight of God and of all Heaven? It is doubtful if the greatest archangel ever went through such a test of his loyalty to God as did this mourning captive, tho not sustained as we are by the Glad Tidings of the New Testament. To all eternity justification by faith will be the supreme honor of the redeemed sons of men!

Chapter V

ISHMAEL

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The world once came near being overwhelmed by the Arabs as they issued from their deserts.

They then characteristically, because suddenly, rushed upon the nations, unannounced and unheralded, for no one looked for world-conquerors from their sandy quarter any more than for snow-storms. Furthermore, their conquests were not only rapid and wide-spread—it is said that the Caliph Waleed at Damascus received on the same day dispatches from his generals who had crossed the Pyrenees and from those who had crossed the Ganges—but the results have been so permanent that in comparison Greek and Roman triumphs appear as only passing

victories. European statesmen are now anxiously seeking to make the Moslem of India, Syria, Egypt, the Sudan, Algeria or Morocco share in Western enlightenment and progress. Those countries were long the chief seats of civilization, and in them was the cradle of Christianity itself. But the tough Ishmaelitish thistle now occupying the ground can not be made to bear figs, nor even to grow with fewer prickles. Everywhere, from the borders of China to Tangiers, the Moslem gives to all who are not of his faith the same fierce, or at best sullen, glance, which tells how he hates them.

World events, however, do not occur without corresponding preparations. It is only because old Arabic history is to our public a sealed book that the resistless invasion of this portentous race in the seventh century seems so inexplicable. It

is strange to begin with the mention of a great freshet in Arabia, but three centuries before the Christian era the ancient kingdom of Sheba had its capital city largely built on an immense dam, whose waters irrigated a wide and densely-peopled district. This dam gave way on one occasion, with the effect of so impoverishing the country that eight large tribes migrated to other lands, with results which deeply influenced subsequent history.

The first of these tribes, that of Ghassan, moved into Eastern Syria and founded a kingdom whose capital was alternately at Damascus, or Bozrah, or Palmyra, according to its varying relations to the government of the Roman Cæsars. Their kings bore the name of Hareth, which in the Greek of the New Testament reads Aretas. (2 Cor. 11: 32.) Many of their kings adopted the Jewish

religion, and one of them goes by the title of Zu Nuwas, or furnace-maker, for he kept a furnace burning into which whoever of his subjects refused to believe as he did, had to walk. This fact explains why Paul took letters from the chief priests in Jerusalem to imprison or to kill Christians in Damascus, which he could not have done if the city were then under a Roman governor. It also explains why Paul, after his conversion, was in peril from the guards of King Aretas. (2 Cor. 10: 32.) It may seem strange that Paul then went into Arabia itself, where he stayed three years. (Gal. 1: 1-7.) But if any one wishes to escape from one Arab his best course is to go to another Arab.

Another of these migrants was the great tribe of Azd, which moved into Mesopotamia, a district then largely desert from the long wars which followed

upon the death of Alexander the Great. Here these Arabs founded the kingdom of Hira, long famous in Arabic literature for its paradise-like gardens, its chivalrous men and its gifted poets. The Arabs have always been a poetic people, and to them we owe the introduction of rhyme. The Koran itself is prose rhyme, and most of its influence is due to the charm of its jingle to the Arab ear. It was in this region that Almansur in after times founded Bagdad as the capital of his great caliphate. Strict Moslem writers dislike this name because it means the city of Bagh, the old heathen divinity of the tribe of Azd, and they try to substitute the name Zourá instead, but the ancient name is too firmly rooted to be thus displaced.

Another tribe was that of Beker, which migrating to the north, founded the city of Diarbeker (the mansions of the

sons of Beker). This tribe extended its settlements quite into the heart of Persia. When the Moslem therefore appeared, Persia was already largely Arab, and so fell, with scarcely a struggle, before the Mohammedan invader.

The other tribes set their faces toward the west, and hence called themselves Mughrabs, or western people, known to us in subsequent times as Moors. Their first settlements were in the Sudan, and their fierce descendants still dominate that region. Largely recruited from them, Amr ibn el 'As, in the generation after Mohammed, conquered Egypt with his small body of horsemen, and Egypt has remained fanatically Mohammedan ever since. Still pressing westward the Arab horsemen conquered Northern Africa, and then passed on to found the Moorish Kingdom of Spain.

Thus, for centuries before Mohammed,

the Arabs had their clans gradually gathering about all the gates of the East, awaiting the coming of some superior one of their race to marshal them against an unsuspecting and unprepared world. All along, however, there had been certain strong influences which continued to make them one and alike wherever they were. Pilgrimages had an abiding effect on personal education in ancient times, as Moses well knew when he ordained that his people should go thrice a year to the shrine of Jehovah.

The memory of a boy's first journey with father and mother to such a destination would be life lasting. So, from days of old, Mecca was the meeting-place of the widely-dispersed Arabian tribes, who came to kiss the Caaba or sacred meteorite which fell there.

But the point of interest to us is that, at this concourse the Arabs were led to

display their strong taste for literature, just as Herodotus composed the chapters of his history to be read at the Greek Isthmian games. Naturally, the Arab's first compositions were poetic, and the endeavor was to have their lyrics accepted and hung in the corridors of their temple, hence their name, the "Moallakat," as we would say, the posted poems. Poetic criticism has not been noted for gentleness, as unhappy Keats found, but among eager Bedouin bards the scene often ended in a general row.

Some people persist in thinking that the art of writing is recent, and that in primitive times poems and literary productions had to be memorized. But more than three thousand years before the Christian era people in Abraham's native town wrote receipts for garden and market products just as we have them now, showing that the patriarchs cer-

tainly must have known how to read and write.

There is nothing more certain than that the Arabs had a written literature for ages before Mohammed, and in particular that they were as scrupulous in the preservation of family genealogies as were their cousins the Jews of the Old Testament. A great body of poems of the pre-Islamic days is preserved now wherever the Arabic language is spoken. Personally I much prefer the lyrics of these old times for their fire and native vivacity to their stiff and artificial imitators of post-Mohammedan days, with their laborious acrostics and heavy puns.

But tho its purely Asiatic character keeps the western world unacquainted with Arabic poetry, other developments of the Arabic mind have profoundly affected our whole literary life. The Ulem, or learned man, is as highly rated among

them as Mandarin literati in China. Therefore, soon after Arabic dominion was established, schools of an entirely different order from Greek or Roman models sprang up all over the Eastern world, whose organization we have ourselves closely imitated. To the Arabs we owe the college, and the university with its stated professors, its examinations and its degrees. The oldest universities of Europe, such as those of Paris and Bologna, were simple copies of the great university of Cordova in Spain, where Pope Sylvester IV was educated. They, too, introduced the priceless boon of Arabic numerals to our forefathers, besides algebra, logarithms (both Arabic words), and other branches of mathematics such as sines and cosines in trigonometry.

NOTE—An illustration of what mankind owes to the labor-saving Arabic numerals compared with preceding forms of notation is shown in adding 1848 to 1848; the

Would that these, and many other benefits, particularly among the arts of life, were the chief legacies of this intellectual race to the world! But adequately to explain of what dark portent the rising of this specter from the hot deserts of Arabia meant we must go back to the beginnings of Arabic history.

The greater part of the Arabic race was descended from Joktan (see Gen. 10: 25-30), who is called by the Arabs Kahtán. It was among them that Ishmael settled, and his descendants are therefore called by Arab historians "the

sum is exprest in only four figures, or 3696. Meantime in Roman characters we would have to denote 1848 with the capital letters MDCCCXLVIII, and repeat the same letters; which explains why Cicero complained of the sweating toil of all addition. On that account Homer's total of Agamemnon's fleet is not the correct sum of the different contingents to it which he gives of the Grecian states. Herodotus is worse yet when he gives the total figures of Xerxes' army after enumerating the quota of the various nationalities which composed it. Likewise, what a life-insurance company would now do without Arabic numerals may be imagined.

naturalized," in distinction from the original Arabs, or the Joktanides. The Ishmaelitish branch goes by the name of 'Adnán, and they made their settlements about Mecca. With the careful preservation of their genealogical descent, the position of the clan of Koreish, to which Mohammed himself belonged, is well defined among the descendants of Ishmael. For a long time to the Koreish belonged the custody of the Caaba, and the family derived large revenues from their connection with this center of pilgrimage of the old Arabic world.

Meantime, as it lay between Mesopotamia on the one side and Egypt on the other, Arabia from very early times was traversed by caravan routes, along which cities grew up with wealthy residents engaged in trade. The country between, often desert, was occupied by roving tent-dwellers with their flocks and

herds, whose scanty livelihood was eked out by raids on the caravans. To this day, therefore, Arabia is the natural land of robbers. Meantime the towns, so far separated from one another, have always maintained not only their independence, but also a traditional hostility to each other. An all-round enmity is endemic in Arabia; or, as one of their poets expresses it, "A man can not be without his enemy, tho he contrived to dwell on the peak of a mountain."

Another says: "The love of peace robs a man of all vim. If you incline thereto, better climb a ladder to the sky or crawl into a hole underground, and leave the waves which rise high to them who dare strike for their crests."

We now come to the story of the man who founded the wide-spread religion which embodies above all others the spirit of Ishmael, and from whom he rightly

claimed to have descended. Mohammed was born in Mecca, and there first posed as a Neby or prophet, a justly revered name among all Shemitic peoples. At first, as with other prophets, his message was received by his fellow townsmen with mocking ridicule, a weapon which none can use so effectually as Arabs. The only doing of Ishmael himself mentioned in Genesis is that he was seen mocking. (Gen. 21: 9.) There are many stories of the fun the Meccans made of their inspired Rassoul or Apostle, such as:

> . . . Saith our Prophet:
> When it lightens and it thunders,
> When the wind blows the shutters,
> And the roof leader sputters,
> Know ye that it is raining!

In personal appearance Mohammed was the reverse of an Arab ideal hero, and when it was rumored that he proposed

to fight, it was said, "The terror of his sword will melt every blade, and but for its scabbard 'twould run!"

However, during ten years of persevering preaching of his claims he gathered a certain number of followers in Mecca, among whom was the fiery Omar ibn el Khat-ab and his chivalrous cousin, Ali ibn abu Thaleb, who to this day is the central figure in the bitterly hostile division of the Mohammedan world into the Sheeah or the eastern Moslems, and the Sonnite or northern and western branches, which include the Turks, Arabs and Moors.

But a great change was impending. One day Mohammed met six pilgrims from the city of Yathrib to the Caaba, at a spot still commemorated by a mosque named Akaba. Yathrib, now called Medina, or the city of the Prophet, was then a flourishing town situated twelve

days' camel journey over a wide desert waste from Mecca. As usual its inhabitants were the traditional enemies of the Meccans, and these pilgrims were therefore well inclined to listen to a man who was receiving such ill usage from his fellow townsmen, and who with his followers might be of much service to them. The next year more Yathrib pilgrims came, directed by the original six, and the following year a greater number still, who held a midnight meeting with Mohammed in which they swore a binding oath to become his allies, to invite him and his Meccan followers to Yathrib, and to fight for his faith.

The purport of this meeting leaked out, and the Meccans were furious, for they saw at once that it meant new raids on their caravans by their traditional enemies, reenforced now by the fellow townsmen, whom they had so long insulted and

persecuted. Steps were therefore taken to assassinate the Prophet, but he had fled, and tho sharply followed, it is said that he secreted himself for three days in a cave by the road.

Islam, by a true instinct, dates its origin, not from the beginning of Mohammed's announcing himself as a prophet, but from the Hejira or flight of Mohammed from Mecca. Then it was that Mohammed showed himself in his true character, and from that date his religion has remained the religion of the sword.

Chapter VI

THE RELIGION OF THE SWORD

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THE RELIGION OF THE SWORD

The people of Yathrib or Medina received the fleeing Mohammed with open arms, and welcomed his companions as they followed in small companies. By his politic behavior he soon won over the whole town, with one notable exception to be mentioned later. Meantime the character of his preaching entirely changed. After the Hejira the merit of fighting with the sword for the Eman, or faith, surpassed every other merit. A drop of blood shed in the cause of Allah would be of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer. To be slain in battle meant all sins were immediately forgiven; the most awful wretch in his earthly life being at once wafted up to Paradise,

there to enjoy in the arms of the dark-eyed houris an eternal sensual felicity.

Mohammed's constant sanction for everything that he said or did was a direct message from Allah, sent by the Archangel Gabriel. If the question arose whether or not a plundering expedition should be undertaken, in what way the booty was to be divided, whether a whole tribe was to be put to death, or even whether a new wife was to be added to his harem (they finally amounted to thirteen), the Angel Gabriel was close at hand to give the inspired word.

Mohammed soon had to provide sustenance for the Meccans who had followed him to Medina, and naturally he suggested raids on the Meccan caravans, for which his converts in Medina gladly volunteered. In some of these attacks Mohammed was not successful, but at length several caravans were plundered,

so that finally the Meccans, one thousand strong, marched against him. Mohammed met them with only three hundred and twenty-four combatants. His followers, and especially the Medinian contingent—afterward named for their aid, Ansar—fought desperately, and finally routed the Meccans. This battle of Badr, as it is called, was Mohammed's first real victory. He owed it chiefly to the Ansar. The Ansar, or Medina champions, indeed might be rated the real founders of Islam. It is an instructive comment on the bloody after history of this religion that sixty years later Medina was well-nigh blotted from the face of the earth, after the disastrous battle of Harva, when the wretched Yezid, the caliph of Damascus, overthrew the army of Medina, slaughtered the sacred band of the aged companions of the Prophet, and sacked the city. The Syrian victors

stabled their horses in the holy mosque that was built by Mohammed's own hands, and fastened their halters in the very tomb and pulpit of the Prophet. Few of the men escaped, the women were violated and the children cruelly massacred.

The victory of Badr threw a lurid light on Mohammed's disposition and character. Immediately after Badr he caused two cold-blooded murders, the one on a woman and the other on an old man, of whom he had no other complaint than that they had attacked him in satirical verses. The woman's name was Asma. "Who will rid me of this woman?" he inquired among his disciples, and henceforward he made a similar inquiry whenever he wished to get rid of an enemy. A man of Asma's tribe made the offer, crept into the woman's house at night while she was in bed with her children,

and stabbed her to the heart. The murderer joined the Prophet in the Mosque at daybreak and told him what he had done. Mohammed, turning to the congregation, said, "Behold, a man who has served Allah and his Prophet well!" The murder of the old man was equally cruel. He was a Jew, and Mohammed's awful cruelty to the Jews should now be explained.

Flourishing communities of Jews had long existed in Arabia (see Acts 2:11), some of them claiming descent from fugitives from Jerusalem when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Like Jews elsewhere, they adopted the life and ways of the people among whom they settled, and as usual roused the cupidity of their neighbors by becoming wealthy. In some respects they improved upon Arab traits by developing a fierce antagonism to other communities of their own race.

The stories Josephus tells of the bloody feuds between the inhabitants of Jerusalem while the Romans under Titus were actually besieging the city, almost surpass belief. They are, however, paralleled by the behavior of the three Jewish communities in Medina, called the "Benon Kainoka," the "Benon Nadhyr" and the "Benon Coraitza," which enabled Mohammed to compass their destruction.

When Mohammed first arrived at Medina he tried to win over the Jews by claiming to be one of their own prophets. But this did not work. Their rabbis treated him with a supercilious contempt that Mohammed could never forgive. Immediately after Badr he began with the Benon Kainoka on the pretext that Gabriel had revealed to him that they intended to assassinate him. Summoned to surrender at discretion, the Kainoka shut themselves in the fortified quadrangular

houses in which the Jews occupied their quarter of the city, and there they stood a siege of fifteen days, at the end of which time they were compelled to give themselves up. The men, seven hundred in number, would then all have been slaughtered but for the leading chief of Medina (before Mohammed came), whose name was Abdallah; with him the Kainoka were confederate, having once helped him fight a tribe of his enemies. While Mohammed was gloomily planning the end of the Kainoka, Abdallah forced his way in, and seizing Mohammed by the cuirass under the throat, exclaimed, "By Heaven, it shall never be said that I tamely allowed the men who fought under me at Boach to be murdered!" Not daring to fight this man, Mohammed ordered the lives of the Kainoka to be spared, but all their property was confiscated, and the tribe driven into perpetual

exile. The Angel Gabriel then avenged Mohammed by a new passage in the Koran, in which Abdallah is curst, styled the head of the Hypocrites, and consigned to hell-fire.

Mohammed now gave permission to his followers to slay a Jew wherever they met one, and he forthwith proceeded to exterminate the second tribe, the Nadhyrites. But besides their own brave defense the Nadhyrites had powerful allies in and around Medina, so that Mohammed was obliged to let them depart with their arms and their families. Now remained the unhappy Coraitza.

Mohammed first ordered the herald to proclaim through the streets that no soldier should go to mid-day prayer before he had resorted to the quarter of the Coraitza. Like their sister tribes, they had been shut up in their quadrangular houses, in which they had stood a siege

for twenty-four days, when they were compelled by famine to surrender at discretion, Mohammed refusing to give any other terms. Some of their old allies in Medina then asked Mohammed to spare their lives. He inquired if they would be satisfied with the decision of one of their number, and when they said yes, he named a man named Saad, who, he knew, was in a state of fury against the Coraitza because of a wound he had received in the siege. Saad, when questioned, answered, "The men should be executed and their wives and children sold as slaves." Mohammed gleefully exclaimed, "This is a decision dictated by Allah from the height of the seventh heaven!" The men, six hundred in number, had their hands bound behind their backs and were confined in one of their immense houses, where they passed the night in reciting psalms and in prayer. The next morning

Mohammed went to the market-place and ordered deep trenches to be made. The men were led to the brink, one by one, with their hands tied behind their backs, their heads were hewn with sabers and they were thrown into the pits. The slaughter lasted the whole day and was carried on by torchlight.

Moslem writers give many pathetic tales of the agonized Jews during the successive scenes of this massacre, but with the comment that it was deserved because they had reviled the Apostle of Allah! The world should now understand why such awful massacres as those of the Greeks in Scio, of the Syrian Christians in 1860, of the Bulgarians in 1877, of the Armenians barely two years ago, and of a multitude of others like them through the centuries—why these are the natural outcome of the religion whose founder himself has never been

surpassed by any of his followers for malignant cruelty in planning and accomplishing such atrocities. The lately deposed 'Abd el Hamid walked in the footsteps of his revered Prophet when he lay awake nights plotting the slaughter of his Christian subjects.

In his further career Mohammed planned the destruction of Chaibar, the largest and wealthiest Jewish city in Arabia, sixty days' journey from Medina. He commenced operations by having the chief of the place secretly assassinated. His successor he invited with fair pretenses to Medina, and then caused him with thirty of his followers to be waylaid and murdered on the road. Moslem writers who detail this act of treachery justify it as ordered by the Angel Gabriel himself. Mohammed then marched against Chaibar and took it after a month's siege. The property of the whole population was

confiscated, tho their lives were spared with the exception of one man, who was put to death because the prophet coveted his wife. The spoils of Chaibar were very great; the prophet's share alone brought him thirty thousand *wasks* of dates yearly—enough to maintain twenty thousand men in the field for three months. By politic administration of the spoils secured from the destruction of these wealthy Jewish communities he was enabled to gather round his standard immense numbers of the robber Arab race, to be let loose by his immediate successors upon the nations of the world.

Three months after his capture of Chaibar, Mohammed fell sick and died. His last words are reported to have been imprecations on all Jews and Christians, and prayers for their destruction.

We have no space to detail how his followers were soon reaching for each other's

throats on account of disputes as to who should be Mohammed's *Khaleef,* or Caliph (that is, his successor). Abu-Bekr, Mohammed's aged uncle, was first chosen by those partizans who were opposed to Ali, but he soon died. Then Omar, under whom Islam made great foreign conquests, and lastly Othman, were chosen. Those who sided with Ali, however, never abandoned the claim that he should have been the first Caliph, and to this day a strong guard watches over the graves of the first three caliphs, corresponding to Peter, James and John in the Christian church, lest the resting-places of these pillars of Islam be defiled by some Persian fanatic from Teheran or Shiraz. All three rival claimants, Ali, Omar and Othman, were separately assassinated.

One of the relics of barbarism among us is the common idea that a race of conquering warriors must be superior

beings to those whom they vanquish. The truth is that it often has been the reverse; so that the civilization of the conquered nations has in time caused their barbarian invaders to become one with them. It was so with the Manchus in China, with the Turks who overthrew the Arabian caliphate, and with the Germans who conquered the Roman Empire. But any people who give themselves to the arts of peace must by so much desist from bodily training for war. Therefore, all ancient statesmen, with one exception, inculcated in their countrymen the duty of learning how to fight, in order to defend the state from overthrow by the barbarians beyond their borders. That one exception was Moses, who never betrayed a statesman's fears on this account: his one foreboding was that his people would forsake the service of their God. Nevertheless every ancient civili-

zation finally fell before the onsets of desert-born hordes. At this we need not wonder, for a prolonged devotion to peaceful pursuits unfits a people for repelling armed savages; an ordinary citizen among us, be he merchant or professional man, would be knocked down easily by a trained pugilist. The peoples whom the Arab horsemen so quickly overthrew had for centuries enjoyed the settled rule of the Roman Empire, and it was not until that Moslem cavalry met the sturdy Frank warriors under Charles Martel at Poictiers that they had to run from the field and never return.

We now come to one of the most serious facts of history. Never are the solemn words of our Lord more impressively fulfilled than in the state of the great Eastern Christian Church after it was overwhelmed by the Moslem: "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt

have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." (Matt. 5: 13; also Luke 14: 34, 35.) From the time of the so-called conversion of Constantine every Roman citizen became ex officio a Christian. The church was soon submerged by an influx of men with essentially heathen ideas and conceptions, until scarce a trace of primitive Christianity remained. All attempts at conversion of the pagan world ceased, and the church itself was rent into fragments by ecclesiastical disputes about words. Pagan fetishism began to prevail, such as the worship of relics and the veneration for self-mutilated anchorites. Meantime under the Byzantine emperors the church felt secure, as its population increased through Asia Minor, Armenia, Syria, and Egypt. Suddenly, like the scorching

eruption of Mt. Pelée, Saracen horsemen burst upon these lands, and in an incredibly short time Khaled ibn el Waleed and Abu 'Obeideh reported to Medina that they had destroyed eighty thousand Christian churches and slain multitudes of their worshipers.

The fate of those who survived was for many centuries pitiable in the extreme. They could save their lives only by yearly paying the *kharaj* or capitation tax, which till lately (owing to the intervention of the European powers) was accompanied by the most insulting conditions. Some of these Armenians and Syrians have described to me that when they paid the tax they were obliged to kneel while the Moslem official struck them on the nape of the neck with his shoe, exclaiming, "You Christian dog, this is in place of the sword which you deserve!"

Chapter VII

ISAAC AND REBEKAH

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The family is the foundation underlying everything in this human world. It was therefore fitting that the beginning of the kingdom of God as a distinct institution on earth should be in a family. And so it will be at the end, when men shall come from the east and from the west, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their children and brothers of one family. There is a grandeur as well as a beauty about that conception which nothing can surpass.

In this story of the patriarchs, the family is all there, with woman holding her natural and important place. In fact, simple naturalness is the dominant characteristic of the whole narrative. As in

other families, so here no two persons are duplicate of each other, but rather show their distinct individualities, just as Shakespeare's characters act themselves out without any description. We could never confound Abraham with his son Isaac, and still less Jacob with his father. Nor is there, as in romance, either a hero or a heroine.

Abraham might easily have been made an imaginary hero, both in his virtues and in his failings; but he is described as the reverse of heroic when he tamely surrendered his wife to another man and lied in the act. Isaac is also described as doing the same thing; and as to Jacob it is difficult to have any patience with him in many of the details of his biography.

Romances end with the wedding, whereas that is only the beginning of real life. Any one who can look back over many

years spent since his wedding-day well knows how little of the future could then have been foreseen. When children come and then grow up, every loving parent knows how anxiously questions about the years before them press upon his or her heart, and, if they marry, how much of that future depends upon their partners in life.

All this Abraham felt, as related in this chapter, and there he shows us what we should do in like conditions. Nothing, then, is so foolish as to imitate the novelists and look no further than the festive marriage day. Abraham well knew that his son might easily be attracted by the daughters of Heth—as his grandson Esau afterward was—and he resolved to prevent it.

It is legitimate to conclude that Abraham's kindred in Mesopotamia were not wholly given up to the gross idolatry of

other nations in those times, for not only did Rebekah's family at once recognize who Abraham's God was, but direct testimony to His worship among early Semitic tribes occurs frequently. An instance is the case of Balaam himself and Jethro, the priest of Midian; that of Melchizedek, and especially that of Job. Not so, however, among the Hittites, who afford us abundant evidence in their monuments that their religion was of the most sensual and animal type. Indeed, it is surmised that the most repulsive features of Greek mythology were derived from the nature worship of Asia Minor where the Hittites first rose to power.

The story of the patriarchs, however, would be but imperfectly understood if we failed at this point to take into account some important elements in their life. Thus, it is justly regarded in the

Bible as a sign of Abraham's faith that he left country and kindred at God's command and went forth as a stranger into the world. But some facts in my own personal experience illustrate what leaving kindred behind them meant. I was standing near a man while he was receiving payment for the barley which he brought to our house for our horses. Shortly after he left our house he was shot dead by six men who rose from behind the wall of a deserted house. They did not kill the poor fellow for the sake of plunder, but simply because a cousin of his had killed a cousin of theirs some years before.

Once a man in our employ wished to marry a maid of our household, asking my father to give his consent, which he did. Before the marriage could take place our house was surrounded one morning by some thirty armed moun-

taineers, who insisted on taking the girl off to marry her to one of their clan; they swore that they would not let her marry out of her kindred, because they knew not but that this man's family had a blood feud with some other family which might involve them. In fact, while I lived in Lebanon it was regarded as almost an impertinence for the government to punish a murderer. That should be done by the murdered man's relatives; and if they could not catch the murderer himself, then they should kill some relative of his. I have known such plans of revenge to be nursed for twenty years till a favorable opportunity should occur.

In its way this custom serves to check homicide, for a man well knows that he exposes all his kindred for years if he gives way to a murderous impulse. Moses, indeed, afterward tried to mitigate

this savage custom by instituting the cities of refuge against the avenger of blood. But it may well be imagined how Abraham left all human protection behind when he left his kindred, while in our own age no such thought would occur to any emigrant.

Another feature in patriarchal history is the constant fear of the wives that they might have no children. As we will show, it was perfectly natural that in Sarah this fear should override a wife's strongest sentiment. How pathetic the lot of a childless old person is in Oriental countries will appear in narrating this remarkable instance.

When the great British statesman, William Pitt, died, Parliament bestowed a pension of twelve thousand pounds a year on Lady Hester Stanhope, his niece, who had long managed his household. She became partially insane on the death

of her betrothed, Sir John Moore, in battle at Corunna in Spain. Soon after receiving her pension she left England, vowing that she would never have anything more to do with England or the English; a vow which she kept till her death. She came out to Syria and, with what to Arabs was her fabulous wealth, she gathered around her hundreds of Bedouins, Albanians and other adventurers, among whom she went drest like an Arab Emir, with turban, sash and sword. She finally settled on a hill-top named Juneh, near Sidon, where she built a rambling collection of one-story houses, connected with curious passageways. She had quite an interesting library, made up chiefly of books sent to her by their authors. Some of these were autographed with names historic in English literature, and on their margins she often wrote sarcastic comments of her own. I shall never cease

to regret that since I left Syria these books have been lost.

Tho she would not visit the house of an Englishman, she came frequently to my father's because he was an American, and her talks with my stepmother were always enlivening. She said that on one occasion she lay dying, as her attendants supposed, from a fever. She then heard her servants, both men and women, running through the rooms, plundering her furniture and tearing off the rich gold brocades of the divans. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "I vowed then that I would get well and punish the whole brood." So she did, and then, cropping the hair of the women and shaving half the beards of the men, she turned them all adrift by the help of other miscreants who rallied to her in hopes of her money.

One day, some years afterward, the British consul in Beirut received word

that she was really dead. Then, taking my father to perform the religious service, they rode to Juneh and found that this time her servants had done the plundering most thoroughly, except for the books. Her body lay with but a sheet over it, while nothing of value remained to tell of her former splendor. A grave was dug under an olive-tree, and she was buried at night like Sir John Moore, "with lamps dimly burning." There a low mound remains to mark the lonely resting-place of a high-born Englishwoman who died indeed a deserted stranger in a strange land.

For thirty years Abraham and Sarah must have often talked over the prospect that he, a rich man living in an age of universal robbery, might come to his end without a son to stand in his stead. "And the Lord said (Gen. 15, R. V.), Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and

thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, O Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless and he that shall be possessor of my house is Dammaseek Eliezer? Lo, one born in my house is mine heir. God answered, This man shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And Abram believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness."

The story in this chapter reflects great credit on both Abraham's servant, who can be no other than Eliezer of Damascus, and on Abraham himself. When master and servant are so mutually attached to each other there must be much in common between them. Knowing Abraham as we do, the simple trust in Abraham's God, which Eliezer shows, proves that he shared in that faith which makes for righteousness.

The whole narrative abounds in incidental proofs that it belongs to the land where it was written. A town in Mesopotamia would have no fountain like those which supply the Lebanon villages, but only a well. Rebekah carried the jar on her shoulder, which Moses, the Egyptian, would never have seen women do, because in Egypt they always carry it on the head. Rebekah's exact words, "Drink, my lord," I have had repeated to me when I asked a similar favor. Once a woman at a village fountain let down her pitcher on her hand for me to drink, with the same words. On the other shoulder she had a child which I mistook for a boy, and on my asking what was the name of the *'arees,* or bridegroom, which is the title given to a male infant, she answered, "Her name is Murra, or the bitter thing, so called by her mother because she was a girl." The

reader will recall how, in the book of Ruth, Naomi exclaims, "Call me not Naomi (grace or fortune), but call me Mara, for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me."

We first meet here with Laban, brother of Rebekah, whom we are to know afterward as the meanest man yet pictured in Genesis. No wonder that so soon as he saw the jewels of gold and of silver and the rich raiment, and heard how rich Abraham had become, and had himself received valuable presents, he piously exclaimed: "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we can not speak unto thee, bad or good."

That Rebekah was disposed of without asking her consent is also in keeping with Oriental ways, for it would have been considered a piece of pure impertinence for the girl to claim a right to be heard in what is always a mercantile

transaction. Rebekah's readiness to go, however, is easily explicable by the fact that she would thus be rid of Laban, for brothers always tyrannize over sisters there, and moreover she was to be a rich young man's bride.

Scholars are agreed that the account in Gen. 25 of Abraham's second marriage to Keturah after the death of Sarah is an interpolation. Not only is it improbable that so old a man as Abraham would marry again and have a numerous progeny, but the list of the tribes mentioned as thus descended from him is in flat contradiction to the very ancient account in Gen. 10 of the first descendants both of Ham and Shem. In other words it is a clumsy forgery of later times which seeks to make Abraham the forefather of races really older than his times.

Of the three patriarchs Isaac con-

formed the most closely to the standard of the New Testament prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. His flocks and herds grew till they exceeded Abraham's in numbers, but as he lived in the extreme south of Palestine he must often have found it difficult to supply them with enough water, which could be obtained only from deep wells dug in the valleys of the region. Nothing, therefore, as I can personally testify, could have been more exasperating than to find (as described in Chapter XXVI, from verse 12 on) that the wells which his father Abraham had dug were stopt and filled with earth by the Philistines. Frequent strife, often bloody strife, occurs between different claimants for water in such regions, as we know by the lawsuits in our country in Arkansas and Arizona. Twice it is mentioned that Isaac's servants dug new wells and had to encounter opposi-

tion to the use of the water. But Isaac did not resist, and moved away till at Rehoboth, or the Resting-place, he was no longer molested, so that he said, "The Lord hath here made room for us."

In this world we may meet with two men equally good and acceptable to God, but who differ in what is called force of character. The Philistines would not have ventured to fill up the wells of the victor over Chedorlaomer's army. Meantime chiefs of wandering tribes have always been feared by the settled people of a land, because they have so many ways for making trade routes unsafe. But the lesson of Isaac's story is that, tho he did not use his armed trained servants, nor call on neighboring chiefs as allies, which Abraham did, he went on prospering all the same.

It would be easy to picture Isaac and Rebekah passing their blameless lives till

they came to a serene old age. But that is not the way of this world of ours. In spite of their estimable life, which is the model of our marriage service, we shall see that, when their sons grew up, griefs deeply shadowed their declining years. The Bible never deceives us with a heaven on earth.

Chapter VIII

THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

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If an entire stranger to our language and to our civilization should be ushered without any previous explanation into the visitors' gallery of the New York Stock Exchange on an active business day, he would naturally conclude that he was witnessing a large company of raving maniacs, shut up in the building to keep them from harming people on the street. Certainly he would never see American citizens behave in that fashion anywhere else —every individual gesticulating like mad and yelling at the top of his voice.

But buying and selling, especially when done through brokers, are apt, in all countries and ages, to be carried on in pe-

culiar ways. Bargaining therefore often strikingly illustrates the manners and customs of the people and of the time. The same may be said of the expressions used in swearing or in oaths. No one among us now hears the exclamations and swear-words to be found in Shakespeare. So in the Bible, as it is a most natural book, its parts being composed in different ages, the date of the different books can be pretty well fixt by the forms of its oaths or of its bad names. Thus the opprobrious designation, "Sons of Belial," disappears from the twenty-five listed books of the Old Testament after Chronicles, tho the Prophets had many occasions to use the term. Likewise the oath, "the Lord do so unto me and more also," belongs exclusively to David's time.

We mention these facts because we meet with thousands of such illustrations in the Bible, showing correspondences to time

and place, which are as little artificial as any feature in a living face can be, and which the greatest artist could not reproduce in a portrait or in a statue of lifeless stone.

Thus the house in which we lived in Sidon was on the city wall, not far from the upper gate of the city. From our windows a fugitive might easily have been let down in a basket as Paul was (Acts 9:25). Across the road on the outside was an open space where peasants brought their cattle for sale. The inevitable Eastern broker was on hand, and after conducting the negotiation he would bring buyer and seller together and make them clasp hands; then, with screeches matching those of the New York Stock Exchange, he would tell the seller, *barik lu!* (Bless it to him!), and so end the bargain, while the man was vainly struggling to get his hand free. As we shall see, Orientals in

Abraham's time also never dealt in such matters with each other directly, but always through third parties.

In Genesis 23:2 we are told that Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

This statement is enough to illustrate what a disastrous change in the land of the Bible has been wrought by that wretched impostor, Mohammed, as regards the estimation of woman. It is now thought to be beneath the dignity of a man to manifest any sorrow at the death of his wife. I once went to condole with a man whose wife had been killed by lightning while standing in her door, but he showed no more emotion to me than he would at the death of a cat, tho I was sure that he felt his loss keenly.

The next verse introduces us to the children of Heth, or the Hittites, a race which now interests scholars almost be-

yond any other people of antiquity. They belong to the dawn of civilization. Spreading from their original seat in Asia Minor, they founded a mighty empire which extended thence to the valley of the Euphrates and to all Syria. We are now learning that our ancient histories are all histories subsequent to those of much older times wherein great civilizations began and flourished. Antiquarian researches in Greece, in the Ægean and in Crete show that long before the Greeks there were peoples who had attained to a high degree of culture in all the arts of life, and who left written records which are as yet undeciphered. Among such peoples are these Hittites of Asia Minor and Syria. Other than the Bible, the only historical reference which we have to them is in the long, vainglorious account that Rameses II of the XIX dynasty of Egypt gives of his war with

the Kheta or Hittites of Syria; according to his own account, he failed after all to conquer them in battle, but instead ended his campaign with a treaty of peace.

These Hittites have left a number of inscriptions at various sites in their empire, but not till very recently was there much hope of understanding them. In 1908, however, from excavations in their original capital city in ancient Cappadocia, now called Boghaz-keui in Asia Minor, there appears to have been unearthed a chamber of national archives containing documents like those of official correspondence with the Pharaohs of Egypt, and with the states of Mesopotamia. From these it is hoped that clues to the Hittite inscriptions themselves may be obtained. A subject of great interest to scholars is the light which these may throw on the origins of Greek civilization and religion.

The Book of Genesis and the story of Abraham therefore connect us with the primitive empire of Elam and with this mysterious race of Hittites, not to mention the Egypt of Hyksos times and the Philistines. These came from Caphtor, which we now know was the Crete whose very ancient civilization is at present regarded of such importance in all investigations of the story of the Mediterranean peoples. What a record of great changes follows those of Abraham's day! The empires of Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome are all gone, but to Abraham was revealed an unchanging and eternal purpose that through him and his race was to come the blessing for all nations. The name of Abraham therefore was to outlast every other name of human greatness. Abraham, in the twenty-third chapter of Genesis is represented as desirous of buying a burial-place; the an-

swer by the people in the city gate is characteristic of all Orientals. "Thou art a mighty prince among us; in the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead. None of us will withhold from thee his sepulcher, but that thou mayest bury thy dead."

But what this universal generosity amounted to, Abraham well knew. I would myself have owned many pieces of real estate in Syria if each of my many hosts had made good their words that their houses were not theirs but mine. So Abraham says, "Hear me and entreat to Ephron, the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he hath, which is in the end of his field: for the full price let him give it to me."

Ephron was there at the time, and as if he needed not to be entreated he says, "Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my

From a photograph

THE GRAVE OF SARAH

Translation of the Inscription: "This is the Grave of Our Lady Sarah, whom God accepted. The wife of the Prophet, the Friend of God. Upon him be peace."

people give I it thee." After this piece of nonsense Abraham presses for the price, whereupon Ephron answers: "The piece of land is worth four hundred shekels of silver," at least four times its value, "what is that betwixt me and thee?"—words exactly repeated to me many times when the price asked was a conscious swindle. Abraham, however, was in no mood then to haggle over the price, and the bargain was concluded. Abraham then weighed to Ephron the silver, four hundred shekels, current money, with the merchant.

The text could not have read *counted* out the silver, for this must have been at least fifteen hundred years before money was counted and not weighed in mercantile transactions. Money values, indeed, were settled at distinct and different periods in history, so that the approximate age of the Book of Job may be inferred

by the pieces of gold which made Job rich again after his great disasters, as we will show in a future article on that very ancient book.

One item in this real-estate transaction may strike us as singular, and that is that it included the trees that were in the field. With us the trees of course go with the land, but in Palestine an olive grove which takes a century to become remunerative in its yield, and is then worth much more than the ground it covers, would have to be included in the terms of the purchase.

When Abraham was first called, God said to him, "I will make thy name great." To the actual fulfilment of these words we can ourselves testify. There is no final resting-place which is held sacred by so many millions of men as the cave of Machpelah at Hebron. There are the graves of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with

From a photograph

THE GRAVE OF JACOB

Translation of the Inscription: "This is the Grave of the Prophet Jacob. On him be peace."

those of their wives, except Rachel, decorated with ornate hangings. The Israelite, of course, never forgot it, and he is yet with us. With the vast Christian world it is one of the hallowed places of the earth. The Mohammedan now so jealously guards it that a Jew or a Christian can not enter it except at the risk of his life.

All other great names in this world are known only locally. I once spoke to an intelligent Arab about Washington, only to find that he thought I meant Joshua, the son of Nun. But whatever the race be, the sentiment for Abraham is the same, a feeling of deep reverence. Yet Abraham was not a conqueror, nor a great statesman nor a great lawgiver. He was a simple Oriental Emir living a peaceful life in tents. But God had a design, the accomplishment of which was to begin with that man's life, and so the

world instinctively feels that the story of Abraham is different and deeper in its significance than any other human story.

NOTE.—These photographs of the interior of the cave of Machpelah were taken by direction of the Sultan of Turkey by a photographer disguised as a Moslem. He alleges that he could not take photographs of the graves of Abraham and Isaac, because of lack of light. It is more probable that he began to fear for his life.

From a photograph

THE GRAVE OF LEAH

Translation of the Inscription: "This is the Grave of Our Lady Leah, approved of God. Wife of the Prophet Jacob. On him be peace!"

Chapter IX

ESAU OR EDOM

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ESAU OR EDOM

It is no uncommon occurrence to find two brothers, born of the same father and mother, differ greatly both in disposition and in character. This fact finds its fullest Biblical illustration in the case of the twin brothers, Esau and Jacob.

We have special facilities for picturing Esau. The writer of this chapter with consummate dramatic and literary skill so graphically describes how Jacob cheated his brother out of their blind old father's blessing, that the world ever since has sympathized with Esau and disliked Jacob.

The real facts, however, about Esau and his character are these: First of all he

had no taste for home life, but loved adventure in the field. Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that Esau took to the chase only for sport, because hunters in that age had seriously to consider whether they would not be chased themselves.

Indeed, when we review the story of man on this globe we have reason to wonder how the human race escaped total destruction by the wild beasts it had to fight. Only by the infinite human power to *make things,* did the cave-dwellers dispossess from the same caves the saber-toothed tiger and the huge bear, *ursus spelius.* When they went abroad they had to encounter the woolly rhinoceros and the mastodon. Not being arboreal in their habits, these men had to meet everything on foot, with no weapon but stone axes and flint-tipped spears. In the earliest times of history—like those of Nimrod, who was "a mighty hunter before the

Lord''—the war with wild beasts was one of life and death, and by no means a simple pastime. By Esau's day men had much improved their weapons; they made these first of bronze and then of iron. Yet even so it called for cool courage to meet a great beast in close combat. To avoid this, men invented the formidable weapon of the bow; we see the Assyrian monarchs, long after Esau, picturing themselves filling a lion's body with the arrows which they discharged from their chariots.

It seems almost a jest to speak of a lion as being formidable now, when he can be finished a quarter of a mile off by a Winchester rifle. Yet Mr. Roosevelt, in his ''African Game Trails,'' says (p. 62): ''During the last few decades in Africa, hundreds of white hunters and thousands of native hunters have been killed or wounded by lions, buffaloes, elephants and

rhinos. All are dangerous game; each species has to its grewsome credit a long list of mighty hunters slain or disabled." He then recounts the differing views of celebrated hunters in Africa as to which of these four beasts is the most formidable. If that be so now in the twentieth century after Christ, what was it in the twentieth century before Christ?

Men might then well see in a hunter like Esau all those qualities for which the world now admires a brave soldier. Hence it was not unnatural for Isaac to pride himself on his hunter son, much as parents still are often more proud of their soldier son than of his brother engaged in trade or working the family farm.

In time, therefore, Esau had about him a following of four hundred men (Gen. 32:6), attracted both by his prowess and because he was the son of a rich Emir. These men did not stay with him for

nothing, but lived, as all Esau's descendants did afterward, by their swords. Here, therefore, we have a wholly new element introduced into the peaceful family life of the patriarchs.

A fair test of a man's character is his behavior toward his parents. We learn "when Esau was forty years old he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite; and they were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah." This was indeed worse than if a son of Christian parents in Turkey now should bring two Moslem women to live thereafter with his father and mother. The tent life of the patriarchs called for much more intimacy than if their married sons lived in separate houses, and Isaac and his wife were not Hittites either in their tastes or sympathies; still less in their religion. There is pathos indeed in these simple

words, "which were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah."

But the test which above all reveals Esau himself was his sale of his birthright for a mess of pottage. When I lived in Sidon I went hunting every Saturday on the foot-hills of that part of the Lebanon, and we always carried a mess of this same lentil pottage cold with us, to eat on the hard tramp. A more savory dish for such a purpose can not be found, and when it is being cooked its smell is truly appetizing. Now Esau had only to wait a little while to get it in his own tent. Yet no; he would then and there sell his very birthright for it to Jacob. Yet not for a moment did Esau then think of selling his birthright to his father's *estate*. That was already pretty well secured to him by his trusty sword, as Jacob afterward found out.

The birthright which Esau sold so

cheaply was the precious heirloom prized above everything else by his father Isaac and by his grandfather Abraham; because it was the family covenant with God, carrying with it the oft-confirmed promise that "in thee and in thy seed shall all the nations and families of the earth be blessed." Both Esau and Jacob had heard from childhood how this covenant was regarded as the most distinctive and precious heritage of the family, because Abraham had left country and kindred on its account. But Esau *despised* it (Gen. 25: 34), and was ready contemptuously to sell it for a mess of pottage, just as Esaus in our day would sell for a plate of oysters a future prospect of converting savages in Africa or New Guinea. Esau at heart cared for nothing but for what this world *now* offers, and this is the ruling principle of action always in the great class of which he is the

type. History illustrates how profound, because instinctive, is the antagonism of this feeling to allegiance to God: how it is always conjoined with indifference to the good of mankind.

Esau and his descendants betook themselves to the land called after them, the land of Edom, and by the Romans Idumea —where they lived as robbers until they were subjugated by David's bloody general, Joab, the son of Zeruiah. This land is the natural home of robbers; to this day no one can visit without an armed escort its wonderful capital, Petra, where houses and temples are hewn out of red granite precipices. Every allusion to an Edomite in the Old Testament witnesses to the hatred, both personal and racial, of the sons of Esau for the descendants of Jacob. One example is that of the words written during the Babylonian captivity (Ps. 137:7): "Remember, O Lord, against

the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundations thereof."

In this chapter of Genesis Esau shows that he shared in the feeling, then everywhere prevalent, that the last words of an old father would permanently influence the destiny of his descendants, for "Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father! And Esau lifted up his voice and wept." (Gen. 6:38.)

Isaac's prophetic answer foretold that Esau should live by his sword and serve his brother, but that at last he should shake the yoke from off his neck. (Vs. 40, R. V.)

These words were literally fulfilled by Herod, called the Great, who was an Idumean. Herod was a cavalry officer who managed to sell his sword just at the right time, first to Pompey, then to Julius

Cæsar, then to Mark Antony, and finally to Octavius, or Augustus. For this latter service Augustus asked Herod what he chose as his reward. Herod's answer embodied the longings of his race through all the years. "I wish to be made King of the Jews!" And so he was, till he had his fill of proving to the Jews that they had Esau's yoke well on their necks. When he was dying he contrived the most original plan in history for showing pure hatred. Foreseeing the rejoicings at his demise, he ordered that a large number of prominent Jews should be confined in one building till he breathed his last; then, all should be put to death, so that there would be wide-spread mourning among his subjects in spite of themselves.

The Prince of Peace was born while Herod was King and the dark, sullen Tiberius was Cæsar. No one can read the life of Tiberius by the Roman historian

Suetonius without a shudder. How the world did need that Advent in little Bethlehem!

At that time the ruling caste among the Jews belonged to the sect of the Sadducees who "say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit." (Acts. 23: 8). They interested themselves only in the things of this world; they were the practical politicians of their day. On this account they so attached themselves to the fortunes of the Edomite dynasty that they were called Herodians. (Mark 12:13.) A constant characteristic of such men is that they jeer at every reference to the concerns of another life, just as Esau himself preferred a mess of lentils to any future spiritual good. In keeping with this spirit, the Sadducees sneeringly asked our Lord what the predicament of the woman would be at the resurrection, when she would have to choose her eternal husband

from among the seven brothers to whom she had been married here, according to the Mosaic law.

We could almost thank those Herodians for being the occasion of our Lord's answer: "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven." And the continuity of that future life is proven by God Himself when He said, "I am," not *I was,* "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living!" Those men might of themselves have known that in a world where there are no deaths there should be no births.

The Sadducean Annas and Caiaphas were the active agents in the murder of our Lord: nor do we read of a single Sadducee having been reached by the Spirit of Pentecost, while that vehement Pharisee, Saul, became afterward Paul the Apostle.

Sadducees are not the stuff of which martyrs are made. Therefore, after Jerusalem was taken and the political Jewish state overthrown by the Romans, the Sadducees soon became extinct; while their more earnest opponents, the Pharisees, survived and in time wrote the Talmud. In that production Annas and Caiaphas are bitterly denounced as thieves for their unlawful gains in the sale of the sacrificial animals brought to the Temple. (Compare Matt. 21:13.)

Our Lord's words, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:6; Mark 8:11, who says "leaven of Herod" and Luke 12:1) were words spoken for all time. It is instructive to note that the Apostles, who recorded these words, proceeded to show such utter misconception of their purport as to bring upon themselves one of our Lord's sharpest rebukes. Instead of referring to

men in all future ages, the Apostles thought "the leaven" referred to the accident of their neglecting to bring bread in the boat! We may add that of the thirty-eight references to what the Apostles themselves either said or did, all except two are to their lasting discredit. This shows what honest men they were. It also illustrates the loneliness of Jesus among them—and if among them how wholly alone He was in this world!

Leaven does not act by physical or chemical properties; it is a microscopic plant; it is a living agency. Hidden in three measures of meal, nothing at first could be more unseen or silent during its transforming work. This renders the reference to it impressive. The leaven of the Pharisees and the wholly different leaven of the Sadducees work first in the secret chambers of the human heart, until the man becomes accordingly changed from

what he was. In that age the two schools of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees were fundamentally opposed to each other, and tho those two names are no longer heard, their principles—or leaven—live on, to be guarded against through all the centuries. We find them both among us now. Indeed our own is more a Sadducean than a Phariseean age.

This earth is now a much pleasanter place than it was. Modern progress has been particularly marked in adding physical comforts of every kind to life. Therefore we need not wonder that our world should be given over to that spirit for which we have such a good name, Materialism. This unquestionably material world, we are told, is the only world in sight. So make the most of it while we are in it. "Therefore let us eat and drink!"

"Be not deceived," says Paul. Even

the Romans called the Epicureans who talked thus "pigs." (Horace.) Instead of being a harmless doctrine of philosophy these conclusions are the worst of all, as we see exemplified by that Satanic historical figure, Julius Cæsar. Sallust, the Roman historian of the Catiline Conspiracy, gives a speech of Cæsar's in the Roman Senate in which he said that all men equally become nothing at death, and therefore are of as little account as so many swarms of flies. Now Julius cared little for either eating or drinking, but he did care much for his own glory; he therefore furnished, at his own expense, fifteen hundred gladiators to kill themselves on one night for his enjoyment and that of the vast multitude in the amphitheater. This awful sight was simply sport for him and his like. In his Commentaries, he relates the defeat of a Germanic tribe on the banks of the Rhine.

He noticed that their wives and children were collected on an island in the river, which could be reached by his cavalry. He then, as Gibbon remarks, "with cool brevity simply says, 'for slaughtering them Cæsar sent his horsemen.'" Nor, according to his own account, was this a solitary specimen of his doings.

And why should this man, who is estimated to have caused the death of well-nigh two millions of the human race, care? After this life there will be neither slayers nor slain. Nothing; certainly no Judgment. If so, why should men care whether they be good or bad? Death will soon make no difference between saints and sinners; therefore, why should a man trouble himself to be virtuous, when he must come to the same end as the most abandoned wretch that lives?

Sadduceeism, whether ancient or modern, engenders the most degrading of all

conceptions of human nature. Many say that man must be insignificant indeed, when his native earth is but as a grain of sand among the physical worlds in the skies. But every thoughtful student knows that the immensity of Space shrinks into nothing beside the infinity of Time. And if for man with his divine capacities there be a life eternal, then matter and not mind becomes insignificant. The Sadducee has but one measure for time, man's life. Well, therefore, may he despise man for his littleness if even this speck of earth is to outlast him.

But one of the great texts of the Bible is "When he came to *himself*." When a man really comes to himself he soon feels that material things are but husks which the swine do eat, and that he should arise and go to his Father.

Chapter X

JACOB

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JACOB

The story of the life of Jacob and of his family occupies more than half of the Book of Genesis. This is no more than it should, considering how full that story is of instruction. Thus Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are repeatedly named together, but Jacob differed more from his father and grandfather than men usually differ from each other. This only shows how the common impression that God's chosen people should be saints may, for a while at least, be a mistake, because this assumption ignores the great truth that at no time is a human life a finality like a

crystal, but, on the contrary, it always is a growth.

Every human being grows up in an environment which inevitably reacts upon his personality. So true is this that the experience of each life has its own lesson. In Jacob's case we see how one heart-breaking experience after another was needed before Jacob became no longer Jacob, but Israel, the prevailing Prince with God.

Jacob was one of those men whose innate strength of will can be appreciated only by being dealt with. It is from Jacob that there comes to his race that tenacity and singleness of purpose which gives them the advantage over their competitors. War is not the only way to supremacy. The world now at last perceives that the power of money is greater than the might of the sword. At present wars can not be waged without money,

and hence those sons of Jacob, the Jews, if they chose, could arrest the march of armies by withholding their loans.

And in how many other ways does money tell both in the world and in the kingdom of God itself! "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." (Luke 16:9.) However, lest men should think that the eternal tabernacles could be bought with money, he adds, "Ye can not serve God and Mammon."

We almost pity the brave but hasty Esau, the man of the sword, when pitted against his brother, who "was a plain man living in tents." Jacob did not live idly in the tents, for such a great property in flocks and herds as Isaac had, required that constant and assiduous attention which Esau never would give. Jacob

afterward showed how he profited from that early experience by contriving to become rich himself in flocks and herds, much to the discomfiture of his uncle Laban.

Nevertheless, the world has liked Esaus. They are so open-handed and generous, particularly with other people's money. They are so ready to engage in fights of honor, as the world calls duels. In the countries of so-called chivalry the men are fond of military titles; hence their many shootings which really are murders. Nor, as may readily be imagined, do they spend money to support foreign missions. One characteristic of Esaus, however, is that they are easily moved to tears by sudden impulses of fine emotion. Reuben, who was "as unstable as water," readily wept; King Saul often burst into tears as he confest how murderous his designs had been. But transient and intermittent

goodness is a deceptive sham. The greatest liar of my acquaintance, whose life abounded in wrong-doing, could, on occasion, shed tears in great abundance.

Jacob, who started with nothing in his hand but a staff, thus described his doings to Laban as they were parting (Gen. 31:38): "This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from mine eyes. These twenty years have I been in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy flock: and thou hast changed my wages ten times."

By this time Jacob had become what we call a self-made man; that is, one who makes his circumstances and not one whose circumstances make him. This he did through twenty years of labor by day and by night, in sunshine and in frost. Now, time out of mind, fathers, with becoming gravity, have told their sons that the way to success is to persevere in work in all seasons and weathers. Do this, and in time what you wish will be yours. How plain and simple it all is!

There was much to build upon in this man's character. But one of the lessons of his life is that our dangerous temptations are not of superficial or accidental origin. Instead, they come from our oldest personal tendencies. Jacob instinctively felt that he was stronger than Esau, and therefore he proposed to overreach his brother.

Jacob, however, imagined that he would

be justified in the wrong which he was meditating, because of the active cooperation of his mother, Rebekah. She had good reasons for her partiality toward her stay-at-home son, so different from the Esau who had brought the heathen "daughters of Heth" into the family. But, after all, parental partiality is always an evil thing. Often we see it to be stone-blind, as when either father or mother is found preferring the most unworthy child with so little reason that it resembles a senseless animal instinct. We are told that Isaac loved Esau because he liked venison, and on similar accounts he may have altogether overlooked Jacob's great services in attending to his father's property.

But Isaac's unreasoning partiality was no justification for the wicked imposition practised on the blind old man, or for the calculated cheating of Esau. Jacob went

out then, successful in his deception, only to be himself cheated afterward again and again; and to encounter a lifelong series of personal calamities, not one of which, as we shall see, would have befallen him had he not committed that first sin.

Here we are confronted with the mysterious tragedy of human story. We can not tell what a day may bring forth, much less what the years may bring forth of events linked like an iron chain of heavy experiences, one after another, and all connected with and traceable to a wrong step in youth. "It might have been" are words often uttered with a deep sigh. Had Jacob not cheated his father and thus incurred the deadly enmity of Esau, he could very well have obtained from his parents such an outfit for his journey to Padan-aram as became the son of an Emir richer now than Abraham was, in the quest for such a wife as Isaac and Re-

bekah would approve of. His camels would then have been laden with all kinds of presents, and with the silver and gold which Rebekah well knew her brother Laban so highly prized. Laban then would have devoutly exclaimed on Jacob's opening negotiations: " 'The thing is altogether from the Lord. I can not speak to thee either bad or good' (Gen. 24:50). There is my squint-eyed Leah. She will make you a very good wife, but if you prefer Rachel, take her with my blessing!"

Can there be a question that Jacob would have chosen Rachel to be thereafter his beloved and only wife, as Rebekah was his father's?

What might have been! we say again, instead of what did occur to this Jacob, for in the last scenes of his story we hear a broken-down old man sadly saying, "Few and evil have the days of my pilgrimage been!"

The immediate result of his successful deception was that he was obliged to leave home and flee for his life. Esau-like, his brother could not keep his counsel to himself, but talked about it until it came to Rebekah's ears. She then deftly tells Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these, what good shall my life do me?" So Jacob departed with his father's farewell blessing on his long journey to Laban. His going had to be secret. He did not dare enter a town by the way lest he be reported, for such reports are to this day spread with wonderful rapidity from camp to camp.

Let one now read the simple but sublime story of Jacob's dream, and he will not wonder that the name Bethel has come down through all the ages, to Jew and to Christian alike, as the sacred name

for a lonely one in this world. "And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest." The deeper one ponders the uncertainties of life the more he longs for such words from Heaven. Jeremiah well puts it: "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Yet there were some elements in the scene which are not apparent to the English reader. On account of the exceptional clearness of the Syrian atmosphere, I have often heard persons from America say that the sky there seems much higher than elsewhere, while the stars flash so brilliantly that they constantly appear like meteors shooting through the outer field of vision. I can not cease to regret that the Revised Version fails to substitute the word "stairway" for "ladder." Both in the Hebrew and in the Arabic the

names for stairway and ladder are the same, and there should be no doubt which is the preferable word here. One who passed through a great crisis in his worldly fortunes afterward wrote:

> Now may I, whate'er the night,
> See the golden stairway's light
> And the Covenant God above,
> With His messengers of love,
> Coming from the azure deep
> Heavenly watch o'er me to keep!

But the greatest message for Jacob now, when he may well have felt estranged by his sin from God, was that he was to share in the covenant with Abraham and with Isaac, ending also for him in the wonderful words, "and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." As Esau had despised this heritage, so Jacob had sought it, but before this only with that human wisdom which rightly appreciates the relative importance of things. Now its infinite value

was revealed to him in the very glory of heaven.

The next scene of the story shows Jacob with nothing but a walking staff in his hand arriving at the house of his uncle. As an adept cheat Laban could not be surpassed. We must not be deceived by his fine words (Gen. 29:14), "thou art bone of my bone," etc., for that is the way Orientals talk. Laban was soon calculating how much he could get out of Jacob by putting him to work. Meantime Jacob fell in love with Rachel at first sight, and for a man of Jacob's mold, love would be deep. Seven years which he served Laban for her "seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her."

One has to live as I have done in a Mohammedan land where polygamy prevails to appreciate what an abiding curse in life it is. Polygamy so lowers the status of woman that in it never can she

attain either to dignity or to refinement; she is merely a grown-up child with the winsome ways of childhood replaced by coarseness of manner and of speech. This accounts for a number of disagreeable passages in the story of Jacob's wives, which must have occurred as described because they are true to nature. It is only Christian marriage which saves society from the most repulsive decay. The earliest recollections of the children in such a household is that of cursing and bitterness between the mothers, which make their sons and daughters naturally grow up to hate one another, and particularly to hate those of the favored wife. Turkish sultans, therefore, when they came to the throne, systematically strangled their brothers, a tragedy unknown in Christian royal families. We know also how Joseph, the son of the beloved Rachel, fared with his brothers.

But the unruliness of the children is pretty sure to extend in time to the authority of the father, just as Jacob often found with his sons after they were grown.

Peace of mind, therefore, Jacob did not have for a day from the time he was so cruelly cheated by Laban when he passed off Leah upon him. And then on, through one heartless deception after another, until that time when his own children asked him whose bloody coat of many colors that was.

As Jacob saw that he could no longer live with Laban and his sons, his thoughts turned toward his old home with Isaac. But every time this course came to mind the prospect of meeting his warlike and embittered brother came also. It was not till God appeared to him in a dream and told him to return that he concluded to set his face westward. The ensuing jour-

ney was not only long, but with women and children on the camels, and the flocks and herds in such numbers, the progress was very slow, allowing Jacob to pass many a sleepless night in anxious foreboding.

The crisis in Jacob's inner life was approaching. The river Jordan has only one branch flowing into it from the east, called here the Jabbok, which descends in a perpetual cascade some five thousand feet from the tableland of Bashan, its chasm much resembling our great Western cañons. To the brink of this dark gorge Jacob came, to find there a break in his life which forever separated the days and the years which preceded from the new life which followed it.

Chapter XI

THE MAN ISRAEL

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A PLACE can become historic only when it is connected with human events. There are many mountain gorges in the world, but they are nothing more than gorges, while the dark rocky defile of the Jabbok, with its resounding, rushing river, will be always memorable for the living scene which we will now describe. It was night, when great precipices look higher and more frowning than they do by day. The long, narrow road leading down to the water was occupied by a great line of laden camels, with cattle and flocks of sheep, whose attendants made the rocks echo with their shouts. But there were also women and children divided into separate companies, with the slender hope

that thus some of them might escape in the darkness from the massacre which awaited them by the savage horde now descending the other side of the gorge. High up on the brink of the precipice stood Jacob, the husband and father, and there he stood alone.

A young man hardly can conceive how changes in the years will change feelings. Jacob had been at this place before when on his lonely way to his uncle Laban, but now (Gen. 32:10, 11)—"With my staff I passed over this Jordan [Jabbok], and now I am become two companies. Deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children." Every father knows how differently Jacob must have felt then from the time when at the same place, more than twenty years before, he had only himself to think of. God has made

parental love here so deep and strong in order to teach us how great His love is toward us, His children. But love can be known only when it is tested, and what a test for Jacob was that dark hour!

This man *needed* to be moved to the center of his being. For a good man his life had been a long record of inconsistencies, and the first sign of a great change beginning in him is his confession (vs. 10): "O God . . . I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses and of all the truth which Thou hast shown unto Thy servant!"

The greatest cause of self-deception is our inborn sense of self-approval. On its account people are ready with excuses for wrong-doing because they consider themselves different from their fellows. "If only we could see ourselves as others see us" is an old saying, yet few would care so to see themselves after hearing their

neighbors' comments. But we feel that the judgment of God is so true that, when He is drawing nigh, the human heart's first answer is in just such words as Jacob uttered in his agony of suspense.

The scene which followed is sadly misunderstood in its chief feature by the average reader.

Jacob at once recognized that He who then appeared to him in human form was a high, heavenly being, and like an Oriental suppliant he fell at his feet and strongly grasped his ankles. I once saw a poor childless Arab woman do the same thing to an American physician, begging him to use his knowledge, which she thought would enable her to bear a child. I have already explained how hard the lot of a childless wife is in Palestine, and it was difficult for the physician then to make her relax her grasp.

This is the true explanation of the term

wrestling in this passage, and it was like the man Jacob that he would not let go till he had obtained his object.

The lesson of it belongs to all time. God is ever ready to answer prayer, but many are the hindrances, not in Him but in the suppliant, which delay the answer. Jacob had to become an altogether different man from what he had been ere he could receive the divine blessing. Jacob's tenacity of purpose was natural to him, and that is just the trait which God would have us show when we ask great gifts from Him (Luke 18:1). Weak praying will explain why so many prayers are unanswered. Jacob's blessing could not come until he was so changed in his inner man that he could justly be called by another name. For us the promise of this passage is that we may become so renewed in heart that we can forever rise above our old dead selves.

Israel's after-story occupied many years, yet tho he was no longer Jacob, but a prevailing saint with God, those years record little else than sorrows. Jacob-like he continued to grow richer in his possessions, but his sons did not grow better thereby. Simeon and Levi must have been able to command a large following to enable them to carry out the cruel massacre of Shechem described in Gen. 34. Why the other sons are not mentioned as participating in this crime is explained by the fact which we have repeatedly alluded to: such large flocks as the patriarchs possest might be divided into camps separated from each other by weeks of travel in those times. To this day such a scene of massacre by wandering Bedouins is no surprize to the people of that land. Such an occurrence, taking place early one morning, was described to me by a witness of the tragedy.

To his last day Israel did not recover from the shock of this evil deed. On his dying bed he said (Gen. 49:5-7): "Simeon and Levi [Moses' own ancestor] are brethren. Weapons of violence are their swords. O my soul, come not thou into their counsel. Unto their assembly, my glory [inner self], be not thou united. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel." The Bible certainly does not justify those murders which are spoken of now as sanctioned by "the unwritten law."

This event, however, caused the whole tribe to move, with a brief halt on the way on account of one interesting occurrence (Gen. 35:10). The Bible has something to say in favor of every reputable calling. Here we read that "Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and she was buried below Bethel under the oak, and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth."

We have already spoken of those magnificent single oaks which so often are joined to the names of places in Palestine. Only very eminent or saintly persons are buried under them. And there "under the oak below Bethel" this aged nurse was laid to her rest. She had lived to see Rebekah's children grow into powerful clans, but she had preferred to be with Jacob's family rather than with the heathen tribe of Esau.

It is nearly four thousand years ago that this old woman's obituary was given in this short verse, but it speaks better for her than a whole column of a death notice in our newspapers now. On her account that oak was called Allon-bachuth, or the oak of weeping.

Truthfully may it be said of man that for years he needs more nursing than any other earthly creature, and for him only do women perform that kindly work. The

trained nurse of our day is one of the best fruits of the Christian religion; well may she claim for herself the credit implied in this first mention in history of a faithful nurse, who was buried 'mid the tears of a great company of mourners.

After such an exhibition of savagery by Simeon and Levi, we are prepared for anything in the conduct of the other sons. But they surpassed themselves when they brought Joseph's coat of many colors, which they themselves had torn and stained with blood, and then asked Jacob for the most probable explanation. (Gen. 36:35): "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, I will go down to the grave, unto my son mourning."

A more detestable piece of hypocrisy than those mourning sons thus displayed, it would be hard to conceive. But in the

distant background is the picture of Jacob, practising an imposition on his own blind old father, only now to receive himself a tenfold heavier punishment.

Jacob's story grows more and more dramatic as it draws to its close. After the loss of Joseph, another great sorrow befell him which, more than seventeen years afterward, is referred to in this passage. (Gen. 48): "And one said to Joseph, Behold thy father is sick." And so Egypt's Prime Minister comes, bringing his two sons with him. "And one told Jacob, Behold thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." Then, having spoken first about God's guidance in the past, and about Joseph's sons, he pauses and says: "As for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still some distance to come unto Ephrath, and I

buried her there in the way of Ephrath." Here we have the old man's eyes dim with age, reverting as old men's memories do to the smallest details about that which lies near the heart. Joseph had never been to his mother's grave, but he had heard all about it and this reference was not for him; it was "as for me!"

It was but natural that when Joseph took his father in to Pharaoh (Gen. 47:8) this oft-afflicted patriarch should appear very old. When Pharaoh asked him, "How old art thou?" his answer was: "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

This is the first time in the Bible that human life is called a pilgrimage. No name for it could be more touchingly true. An elderly man once said to me, "What,

after all, does one's life amount to?" The answer is that it can not amount to anything unless it be a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage has no abiding-place by the way. That comes only at its end, and that end is the one thing hoped for by the true pilgrim.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the three men constantly named together. But the story of the third stands wholly by itself. Abraham and Isaac commonly appear to us through a sort of mystic halo. But that is not possible with Jacob. Instead we instinctively feel, tho we may not confess it, that Jacob is much like ourselves. But when we soberly consider what Heaven must be, the conception that Jacob is there, standing as a Prince by the throne of God Himself, is wonderfully comforting.

Chapter XII

THE PATRIARCHAL TENT

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It is not easy to estimate how much men are what they are through the influence of the places in which they live. If in cities, then it also makes some difference at what time in history they dwelt there. An ordinary inhabitant of Rome under the first Cæsars would have echoed the cry, "panem et circenses," meaning that the state and not himself must provide him first with bread and then with the entertainment of seeing hundreds of fellow creatures killing each other for the sport of the onlookers. Nor would it have been better in the times of bloody Nineveh or of Babylon. How can we measure the influence for increasing human wickedness which cities then exerted in the world?

Cities were then not less injurious to bodily health. So narrow are the streets in a Syrian city to-day, that often have I been able to touch the wall on either side with a cane without moving from where I stood. Just before my last visit, cholera broke out in Damascus, a town of 120,000 inhabitants, and 1,500 people died in one day from the epidemic. In former times the black death or the bubonic plague often worked similar havoc.

It was therefore most fitting that the beginning of the blessing for all nations and families of the earth should not have been in a city, but in the spacious tents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The first association connected with such tent life is freedom, whether physical, social or spiritual.

I love to dwell on the physical surroundings, because to me they were peculiarly attractive. The whole Syrian

country is open, with no extensive forests. It should be noted that dense forests are inimical to animal life other than that of insects. In such forests birds are few and not one has a musical note. In our own Western States it is not until the farmer has made a clearing for his meadows and orchards that joyous singing birds begin to collect around his dwelling. But on the plains and slopes of Palestine the abundance of bird life surpasses anything which we meet in America. From sunrise on, their varying melodies are heard, and on every side the air is full of their life and movement.

Another feature is the profusion of flowers. If a tourist first visits the Holy Land during the summer months, when not a drop of rain has fallen since the middle of May, he may regard the land as a barren waste. But so soon as the autumn rains set in, the earth literally

blossoms, until in spring the variety and profusion of flowers transcend description. A French botanist who was sent by the *Jardin des Plantes,* of Paris, told me that he had spent five years in diligently studying the flora of Palestine and still he daily found new discoveries awaiting him. In addition I have been told by steamer captains that the fragrance of the mountains is strongly perceptible more than a hundred miles out at sea, when the lofty ranges of Lebanon and of Hermon are not yet in sight.

Another feature is the remarkable clearness of the atmosphere, which often makes distances very deceptive. One effect of this is a matchless variety of coloring in the landscape. Where, as in America, forests cover a large area, all color in the distance merges into a uniform gray. But in the plain of Coelo-Syria, spread out between the ranges of

Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or still more in the plain of Esdraelon (which our Savior often looked upon from Nazareth) as it extends from Tabor and Jezreel to Mt. Carmel, the varied colors of the soil make the picture like that of a vast carpet into which every hue and tint have been marvelously interwoven.

Who would not prefer the healthy, open-air life of the patriarchal encampment to the pent-up quarters and pestilential streets of ancient walled cities?

Yet social freedom is more precious than any physical environment. The Arab tent-dwellers issued in our seventh century from Arabia to become world conquerors and to found great capitals in Damascus, Bagdad, Cairo, Seville and Cordova. But from the farthest east to the farthest west of their vast empires they never forgot the tent. No one unacquainted with the great Arabic litera-

ture can form any conception of the wealth of poetic imagery and of the varied associations which cluster round every mention of the free life of the tent, that old, original dwelling-place of the race. A whole body of traditions concurred to make the very name of the tent sacred—a synonym for safety and protection.

One of these traditions particularly fostered the sentiment of personal honor. A true Arab would die rather than give up either the fugitive who had fled to his tent, or anything which belonged to him. Arabic poets praise a sheik named Samoel, himself a famous poet, who was threatened by the King of Damascus (named Aretas in the New Testament) with the death of his son, whom the king held captive, unless Samoel would give up suits of costly armor which had been committed to his safe-keeping. Samoel's

chivalrous answer was: "Kill your captive, but I will always be a man!"

The tent in time embodied the whole ideal of the family. Once admitted to it, the stranger ceased to be a stranger and was regarded as a born brother, fully entitled to rank with the rest of the household. This fact should be taken into account when interpreting one of the most ancient prophecies in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 9:26, 27). The words, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem," foretell that God would be Shem's distinctive portion in history, while Japheth's would be "enlargement." But the words, "Let him [Japheth] dwell in the tents of Shem," do not mean that Japheth will overcome Shem and occupy his territory. No tent-dweller would think of such an interpretation. They mean that Japheth would be adopted into Shem's family and become partaker of Shem's peculiar privileges.

How much history is comprest into these few words! At present Shem's descendants, the Hebrews and the Arabs, form a small fraction of mankind. Yet it is the God of Shem which the vast world of Christendom worships, and it is the God of Shem which the wide-spread races of Islam reverence from Tartary to Tangier. Nor can European or American worship any other than the God of Shem. Every attempt to adore a creation of philosophy or of human conception ends either in empty pantheism or equally empty negation.

Along with the ideal of brotherhood was naturally linked that of hospitality. An incident in the life of Abraham picturesquely illustrates this trait, as referred to in our first chapter, page 29.

Of the many references in Arabic literature to the hospitality always expected at the tent I would mention the story of

Hatem, the sheik of the tribe of Tai. He owned a mare the fame of which for beauty as well as for high lineage reached the King of Persia, who sent an embassy to Hatem to negotiate her purchase. When the embassy arrived the tribe of Tai was suffering from a famine. All the same the Persians were invited in to dine, only to find that the flesh of this priceless mare was being served up to them.

We come now to the spiritual side of our picture. It is not in vain that the gracious note for man in Messianic prophecy never varies through all the subsequent centuries. Twelve hundred years after Abraham was promised that in him should all the nations and families of the earth be—not conquered, but *blest,* the prophet Micah (Micah 4 1-4) foretold that in the last days men everywhere should "beat their swords into plowshares, and

their spears into pruning-hooks." Nation should not rise against nation, nor should they learn war any more. This prophecy Isaiah also quoted just at the time when the walls of Rome, that city of relentless war, were in building.

This world has always been the scene of bloody strife from the earliest records of history down to the present spectacle of thirteen millions of soldiers in the "standing" armies of Europe awaiting the signal for battle; while the significance of Dreadnoughts is worse yet. Over against this ancient depressing panorama we read (Matt. 8:11): "Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob."

The *tent* with all its sacred and beautiful associations now comes into view. Those "many" belong to every nation, tribe and tongue, who before they came to the *tent* were not brothers but enemies.

But in the tent all become brothers by right. Protection, safety and privilege, based on honor and good-will, with every sign of a hospitable welcome, tell us of the new earth which has become the kingdom of God.

Chapter XIII

PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

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A PROPHECY is altogether different from a mere prediction. A prediction is the foretelling of a future event as the result of something in the past or in the present. Sagacious men have often foretold events which afterward came to pass because of their knowledge of causes in past history which sooner or later would produce corresponding results in the actions of men.

Thus, when the French Revolution began in 1791, Edmund Burke was severely censured in England for predicting that this movement for liberty, which so many then hailed, would end in disastrous failure and in despotism. The event proved that Burke was right. Yet he was no

prophet: he simply knew that the French were not then fit for liberty, and that their freedom would end in the anarchy of the Reign of Terror.

A prophecy, on the other hand, is the foretelling of that which has no necessary connection with either the past or present. Thus, the prophecies which we are to consider in the book of Genesis were fulfilled only when many centuries had elapsed after they were recorded. Nothing in the world, *then*, could have had anything to do with their fulfilment.

Therefore no true prophecy can be of human origin. It is as impossible for a man really to leave this world in time as it is for him to step off the earth in space. Only He to whom a thousand years are as one day can know what time will bring forth.

This is the reason why all Sadducees, both ancient and modern, are so strenuous

in maintaining that there can be no prophecy. According to them there is nothing supernatural. In ancient times they denied that there was any angel or spirit or immortality (Acts 23:8). Their successors in modern times equally affirm that everything occurs only through natural causes, and, as a prophecy is absolutely supernatural, they resort to every device to explain away whatever seems to to be a fulfilment of prophecy; for a single demonstration of one unmistakable prophecy would overthrow their whole doctrine.

Now every one knows that the book of Genesis abounds with what purport to be prophecies, and we are quite willing to join issue with all Sadducees on these alone, for the following reasons:

First, they are farther back in time than any subsequent prophecies in the Bible. They so antedate history that they

can have no connection with it. Subsequent history remarkably fulfils these prophecies, but is no more their origin than the mouth of a river is the river's source.

We have already referred to the primitive prophecy of Noah in the ninth chapter of Genesis. In the following chapter, the tenth, an account is given of the peoples and races which descended from the three sons of Noah. The sons of Ham included the Egyptians and the first peoples of Mesopotamia. For thousands of years these nations took the lead in all civilization. Moses knew of no greater race than the sons of Ham.

Cyrus, the Persian, only five hundred years before Christ was the first descendant of Japheth who founded an empire. The Shemitic Assyrians and later Babylonians, instead of having Jehovah as their God, were given to the very lowest form

of idolatry. It was not till after the Christian era that God became known as the God of Shem by Hebrew, Christian and Mohammedan.

The twelfth chapter of Genesis opens with these words: "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, . . . I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

There is no double meaning in these words, nor in any other of the prophecies in Genesis, as there was so often in the ancient Delphic oracles of Greece. Crœsus relied on the word of Delphi that if he crossed the river Halys against Cyrus he would destroy a great empire; and so he did—but it was his own empire which he then ended. But every prophecy in Genesis is absolute and unconditional, like this one just cited to

Abram. Abraham's name is now more widely revered than any name in the world, alike by Jew, Christian and Mohammedan; yet he was neither conqueror, law-giver nor author, but only a simple tent-dwelling pilgrim in this troubled world.

So also the prophecies about Ishmael, first spoken to Hagar in chapter 16, and afterward to Abraham in chapter 17, ver. 20: "As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, . . . and will multiply him exceedingly; . . . and I will make him a great nation." Generations and centuries passed without the world suspecting that anything great would come from Ishmael, when suddenly, in the seventh century after Christ, the Ishmaelitish horsemen burst upon the world to found the greatest empire—from China to the Pyrenees—which the world has ever seen. Christendom is

yet to discover that Greece and Rome gained only temporary victories in their day, while the Arab conquest is so permanent that now the French in Algiers and Morocco, the English in Egypt and in India, the Russians from the Caucasus to Samarcand, the Dutch in Java, the Americans with their Moros, and all Europe together in Turkey, will try in vain to make the tough Ishmaelitish thistle "bear figs," or even grow with fewer prickles. This is but the fulfilment of the old prophecy that Ishmael will be a wild man, with his hand against every man and every man's hand against him.

The central prophecy, however, is that which was repeated to Abraham three times, once to Isaac and once to Jacob: that in them and in their seed should all the nations and families of the earth be—not conquered—but blest. The blessing was for all mankind. There was

nothing national or exclusive about it, and in this it was wholly unlike anything in history, for men everywhere like to limit privileges to themselves. Nothing so stirred the resentment of the Jews as any word looking to others as sharing with them in the blessing of their Jehovah, as they showed in the case of Paul (Acts 22:21-23): "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience until this word. And they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and threw off their garments and cast dust into the air, the chief captain commanded Paul to be brought into the castle."

Among the prophecies of Genesis are those which particularize the part to be taken in history by the descendants of

two individuals. Isaac's prophecy concerning the future of the descendants of Esau, as compared with that of the descendants of Jacob, was literally fulfilled in the days of Herod. Few persons note the remarkable scene when Joseph brought his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to the bedside of old Jacob (Gen. 48:8): "And Israel beheld Joseph's two sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons whom God hath given me here. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. . . . And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand. . . . And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manas-

seh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born. . . . And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the first-born; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: howbeit his younger brother shall be greater than he. . . . And he set Ephraim before Manasseh."

Now the history of the people of Israel in after ages is given in the Bible much more particularly than any other ancient history, and is fully confirmed in Assyrian inscriptions. From the first the tribe of Ephraim took the leading position;

through all the times of the Judges and the histories of the books of Samuel and of the Kings until, in the times of Isaiah, seven hundred and fifty years before Christ, when the Assyrian blotted the kingdom of Israel out of existence.

Yet it was foretold that Manasseh would also be great; and in after-times from Manasseh arose Jair, one of the Judges; also Gideon, who delivered the land from the Midianites; and Jephthah, who after conquering the people of Ammon gave a severe chastisement to the sons of Ephraim for their insolence. There was also Barzillai, who lent such assistance to David's army in crushing the rebellion of Absalom. Lastly, from Manasseh rose the towering personality of Elijah the Tishbite.

This brings us to the last and most wonderful of the prophecies of the Book of Genesis, found in the poetic farewell of

Israel beginning (Gen. 49) with: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the latter days. Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father."

We should note that for fully a thousand years after Jacob, the children of Israel existed as a people divided into twelve tribes, each as distinct from the other as the States of the American Union. We have far more details and particulars of their long history than we possess about any ancient peoples, not excepting those of Greece and of Rome. It is not alone preserved in special historical books, whose trustworthiness is far more attested than the tales of Herodotus —the day is long past when scholars venture to dispute the authenticity of Biblical history, to which every archeological discovery only adds its confirmation—but all

along the historical books of the Old Testament are accompanied and illustrated by contemporary poets, psalmists and prophets; and yet criticism in vain searches for discrepancies or contradictions in the main current of the narrative.

This prophecy in Genesis begins with Reuben, who should have stood first; but "unstable as water, thou shalt not have the preeminence." (A. V.) Afterward not one of the many judges of Israel came from Reuben, nor a single prophet, nor even one of the many captains of David's army. The only reference to Reuben's actions occurs in that archaic ode of Deborah (Judges 5) which all writers praise for its words of fire and vigor. One should read it on Mount Tabor, as I have done, to feel its thrill, even in the foreign English tongue. After recounting how valiantly portions of the different tribes came up to the help of the Lord

against Sisera, there occurs this cutting chorus:

> By the watercourses of Reuben
> There were great resolves of heart.
> Why sattest thou among the sheepfolds,
> To hear the pipings for the flocks?
> At the watercourses of Reuben
> There were great searchings of heart!

The world also can never forget that one short sentence, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."

A striking evidence of the great antiquity of this passage are the words which follow about Simeon and Levi.

> Simeon and Levi are brethren;
> Weapons of violence are their swords.
> Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce;
> And their wrath for it was cruel:
> I will divide them in Jacob
> And scatter them in Israel.

We can hardly think of ancient Israel apart from Moses. He was not only the founder of its nationality and its lawgiver, but its greatest prophet as well. That his own tribal ancestor, Levi, should

be especially the object of dire reprobation and curse seems passing strange. But the world, especially our own America, has not yet come up to the lofty moral level of these scathing words.

The passage about Judah which follows has caused great searchings of heart among all Sadducees. Judah's name, "Judah thou," *i.e.*, the Lord be praised, thou, which his mother gave him, is its prophetical text. "Thy father's sons shall bow down before thee. . . . The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet [*i.e.*, from the land on which he stood], until Shiloh come; and unto him [Shiloh] shall the gathering of the people be."

How did the ancient Jews understand and interpret this passage? Before the coming of Christ they could have had no motive in changing or in doubting its meaning. Fortunately, we have the clear-

est evidence on this subject through the many paraphrases which were written for the purpose of making the meaning of passages in the Old Testament clear to worshipers in the synagogs, who already had become unfamiliar with the Hebrew text. It should be remembered that the Old Hebrew was a dead language shortly after the Babylonian captivity, its place being taken by the Aramaic or Syriac language as the common vernacular. Thus our Lord Himself spoke Aramaic and not Hebrew.

For antiquity the first place belongs to the *Targums,* as the translations of the Eastern Jews living in Babylonia and in Syria were called. Thus the *Targum* of Onkelos renders this passage: "Until the Messiah come whose is the kingdom." The Jerusalem *Targum* in use among the synagogs of Palestine renders it: "Until the time that the King Messiah shall come whose is the Kingdom." So the

Babylonian Talmud: "What is Messiah's name? His name is Shiloh, for it is written, Until Shiloh come." Similarly it can be shown that all the ancient rabbis who flourished in the centuries preceding the Christian era so interpreted these words.

For the Jews in Western countries the Septuagint version into Greek, made about 250 years before Christ, was the generally accepted translation of the Old Testament. It unmistakably speaks of the name *Shiloh* as the name of a person, meaning "He, to whom it belongs," or "He whose right it is," a very natural reading if the name is a compound name like that of Judah himself. But the root of the name, as all scholars admit, is the word *peace,* and hence, if applied to a person, it means the Peacemaker, or the Man of Peace. Taken thus, as men naturally understood it, this passage means that whatever would happen to the other tribes of

Israel the tribe of Judah would stand possest of its own territory and its own laws and institutions until the man Shiloh should come into the world.

And just so it turned out. All the ten tribes, with Ephraim at their head, disappeared as such about 750 years before Christ, when the Assyrians captured Samaria. The small tribe of Benjamin became incorporated with its neighbor, Judah, while Levi remained, as always, the tribe of the priests, but without territory. Judah stood alone when Christ was born, a nation with its king, its capital city, Jerusalem, and its legal senate, the Sanhedrin. There was but a brief interruption in Judah's national existence during the Babylonian captivity; so brief that old men still lived who wept when they saw the temple built by the returned exiles under Zerubbabel, as they remembered the glorious edifice of Solomon, which Nebu-

chadnezzar had destroyed. When Christ was born the new temple had been restored to all its former magnificence and was the center of the Hebrew race in the whole world.

But in the year 70 of our era the temple was again destroyed, Jerusalem was captured and razed to the ground. Since then the Jews—or men of Judah—have never been a nation possest of a country. The reason was that Shiloh had come and the gathering of the people of the world to Him had begun, tho, so far, without the Jews. But all this strikes at the very root of Sadduceeism, because this passage then would be a great and wonderful prophecy. The Jews also, whose state and temple and capital had been utterly destroyed by the Romans, were much embarrassed when Christians asked if Shiloh had not plainly come—the Man of Peace to whom the nations of the world were

gathering, while scepter and lawgiver had long disappeared from Judah.

It was under such compulsion that Rabbi Lipman in medieval times suggested this reading: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver, until the Shiloh-coming, or the coming to Shiloh—which Shiloh was the place where the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant rested after Israel entered Canaan and to which the people assembled until Shiloh was destroyed by the Philistines in the youth of Samuel."

In this rendering, violence is done to the sense and to the grammar of the words, for Shiloh is the nominative to the verb *come.* Yet some critics with Sadduceean or rationalistic tendencies echoed the rabbi's interpretation. The actual historical facts do not, however, connect with them, for, previous to the coming to Shiloh, Judah held no scepter;

it was a descendant of Ephraim, Joshua, who held sway if any one did, and the only lawgiver was Moses of the tribe of Levi.

Against this unnatural rendering we need only cite the unanimous testimony of all interpretations and translations of the ancient Jews before the coming of Christ; they surely knew just what the words meant and to whom they referred, while they had no motive to think otherwise.

The rest of this admittedly archaic ode does not now concern us. The future of the different tribes is sketched in graphic poetic terms and was repeatedly illustrated in after history. But the story was all finished twenty-seven centuries ago, with the exception of ever-abiding Judah. Naturally, we all would have wished that Joseph should have been decreed to stand instead of Judah. Of Judah all that we

know is that, as with many a strong character, whatever he proposed was acquiesced in by the rest, tho otherwise his private life was the reverse of estimable. But God's purposes are not according to man's purposes or wishes. It was not Rachel, whom Jacob loved, but Leah, his first and therefore legitimate wife, who was laid beside him in the cave of Machpelah; and it was her son, Judah, who from age to age was to represent the people of the covenant. One passage, however, interests us, and that is the last:

"Benjamin shall raven as a wolf. In the morning he shall devour the prey and at night he shall divide the spoil"—a figure of a restless, insatiable character. All through a subsequent history a Benjaminite was generally in every disturbance. In the New Testament there was a Hebrew of the Hebrews of the tribe of Benjamin, who was charged with setting the world

upside down. But of all his Master's apostles he was the one who never rested, day nor night, but to the end of his life showed what a consecrated Benjaminite could be.

This remarkable prophecy differs from others in Genesis, in that the attention is fixt upon a person. It is not the God of Shem, nor the blessing awaiting all the families of the earth, which is its subject, but the coming of the Man of Peace, to whom the peoples of the earth are to gather together.

And, ever after, the prophecies of the Old Testament refer to the personal figure of the Messiah, or the Christ, the Anointed One, who is to be the Hope of the World.

Some persons have wondered why this remarkable prophecy is not alluded to in the New Testament, but it should be remembered that every book of the New

Testament except the fourth gospel was written before the fall of Jerusalem, and therefore that Judah was still standing before the world, with his own country, and capital city, and Sanhedrin.

Chapter XIV

THE AUTHORSHIP OF GENESIS

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One of the first requisites for properly estimating the nature of any book is to recognize the chief object of its author in writing it. Regarded from that standpoint, the intention of the writer of Genesis undoubtedly was to narrate the memoirs of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the story of the latter and of his family occupying more than a half of the book. Everything, therefore, in that part preceding the twelfth chapter, which contains the accounts of the creation, of the flood and of the early migrations of the different races and of the cities which they built, were, in the author's view, merely introductory to the main theme of his book. In modern times, however, owing to our great interest in the views of

ancient peoples, as to their origin and the beginnings of civilization, this part of Genesis is often spoken of as the most important of all, in the mind of the author himself.

What a mistake this is might be inferred from the great antiquity of the art of writing. Abraham's story begins with his nativity in the city of Ur of the Chaldees, whose people at that very time took receipts from each other in the purchase of grain, cattle and slaves. We have now, in our museums, many of their clay tablets, covered with clear and distinct characters, in which commercial contracts are recorded, or the results of surveys to settle titles to landed property. Instead, therefore, of Abraham's story beginning in the uncertain mists of antiquity, its real date is quite late in the history of civilization.

This fact further throws light on an-

cient chronology. There was then no settled era of chronology anywhere. Each city gave dates according to the reigns of its kings. The first beginnings of chronology were in systems of genealogies, which the Hebrews also naturally adopted without, however, a thought of their being used as modern historical dates. To be historical, every name in the genealogical list must be given with the date of the birth of his son next in line. The Bible gives us a number of such lists, all equally useless for chronology, because they systematically omit many names in the line of descent, as when Matthew begins the generations of Jesus Christ as the son of David, the son of Abraham. Hence, no system, like Bishop Usher's, which makes the world only six thousand years old, has any claim to our credence. There is nothing in the Bible which would forbid our acceptance of evidence that man has

existed on this earth for unnumbered thousands of years.

From ancient times, the first five books of the Bible have been considered together as one production, to which later the Greek term Pentateuch (or five books) has been applied. Equally by Jewish and by Christian writers, these have been termed the Books of Moses, tho his name has never once been mentioned in Genesis, nor does the subject-matter of that book ever refer to him. Ancient usage so differs from ours in the respect of naming authors, that it can not be our guide either way. The immortal poems of Homer never once mention his name. We must therefore adopt some strictly scientific principles to guide us in such an investigation and consistently adhere to them, if we are to escape vain theories, based merely on the hypotheses of different writers.

The first principle appears in the question, *Where? Where* was a book written? Every book, as well as every person, must have a *Where,* and whether historical, biographical or poetical, is sure to reveal the nativity of its author. This fact we can illustrate by citing two passages describing autumn scenes, and written in the same English language. The first one is in the lines from Tennyson's "In Memoriam":

> Calm and deep peace on this high wold
> And on these dews that drench the furze,
> And all the silvery gossamers
> That twinkle into green and gold.
>
> Calm and still light on yon great plain,
> That sweeps with all its autumn bowers
> And crowded farms and lessening towers
> To mingle with the bounding main.

These lines must have been written in Old England and not in America, where the words "high wold" and "drenched furze" are unfamiliar. Nor do scenes of

"crowded farms" here show "lessening towers."

Compare with this Whittier's "Last Walk in Autumn":

> Along the river's summer walk
> The withered tufts of asters nod
> And trembles on its arid stalk
> The hoar plume of the goldenrod.
> The silver birch its buds of purple shows
> And scarlet berries tell where bloomed
> The sweet wild rose.

Now, nowhere else than in New England could these lines have been written and by one native born to the ground, which is decked with "wild asters" and the "goldenrod."

By just such proofs we are to show that whoever wrote the Book of Genesis must have been born and passed his boyhood in Palestine, which was not the case with Moses.

Next, but scarcely less conclusive, is the question *when* was the book written. This is particularly the case if the book

abounds with historical and biographical allusions. By these evidences it is easy to prove that the author lived a good while before Moses was born.

In this connection we would allude to the physiological fact that the human brain attains its full weight for life by the end of its seventh year. During those five years, between the second and the seventh, the brain is more active and works better than it ever will again. Not only is language then gained, but the observations of the world around us, along with their memories, are then more accurately registered than is possible with adults. Thus an old man, who can not recall what happened a week before, will yet minutely describe his father's barn, with all the red marks on its door, and the tree near by which bore such splendid apples. No foreigner could hope to match this accuracy of boyhood without making

now and then a slip which would betray him. Thus I read in a prominent English periodical a laudatory article on Abraham Lincoln, in which it was stated that in his youth Lincoln was a LATH-splitter—a natural mistake in one who never saw an American rail fence.

But by just as conclusive evidence we will show that whoever wrote the first twelve chapters of the Book of Exodus must have been born and passed his youth in Egypt, and in no other country on earth.

It should be remembered that in ancient times there were no geographies written and, still less, gazetteers.

Even now, with all the information which we have about foreign countries, he would be a bold writer among us who would compose a fictitious story, with its scenes in the heart of France, for example, and never make a mistake about the

relative position there of some insignificant villages.

For example, in Genesis 12:6, on Abraham's first entering Canaan we read that he came to the *place* of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Shechem is here designated merely as a place; but in after ages it is mentioned in the Bible as a large and famous city, and is now second only to Jerusalem in that part of Palestine. Again, note the words, "Unto the oak of Moreh." We have already shown that no one outside of Syria could speak of the oak of a place. In the Old Testament, however, such a phrase occurs very often, for these great, solitary oaks are a peculiar and striking feature of that land, tho nowhere found in Egypt or Arabia. In verse 8, Abram's next halt was where he had Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. It is a sign of the antiquity of this passage that Ai was destroyed by Joshua

more than four hundred years afterward (Joshua 8:28), and never rebuilt, while here it is particularly spoken of as existing.

The same kind of minute local detail continued throughout this ancient book; and when Abraham, and after him his son Isaac, journeyed into the dry regions of the south of Palestine, it became imperative for watering their flocks and herds that they should have wells in the rocky valleys there. Such wells, however, could be dug only with much labor, and hence each well received its own name, many of which remain to this day. But in the north of Palestine, as at Nazareth and throughout the whole districts of Lebanon and Hermon, wells are never mentioned, because each town is supplied with its own fountain or fountains. In flat Mesopotamia, on the other hand, wells are again mentioned. And here we read

of Rebekah letting down her jar of water from her shoulder to give Eliezer a drink. But in Egypt wells naturally are not spoken of, for the whole country depends on the Nile for its water, and it is doubtful if Moses ever saw a woman carrying a jar of water on her shoulder, for Egyptian women invariably carry such jars on their heads.

Finally, one of the most conclusive signs of the great antiquity of Genesis is its preservation of the old names of places, which in subsequent ages were changed. If we should read a book which invariably used the name "Manhattan," we would conclude that it was written when what is now called New York was still in possession of the Dutch. But Genesis abounds, as no other book in the Bible does, with names which in after times had to be explained to the reader, as then, with another designation. All scholars are

agreed that this is the cause of these running notes in the text. Thus in Genesis 22, which tells of the intended sacrifice of Isaac by his father, in verse 14 it is recorded that Abraham called the name of the place "Jehovah-Jireh," "Jehovah will provide," as it is called to this day. "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided." This last phrase was added in after times, to make it refer to the Mount of the Lord, which was the classical name for the site of the temple. In Genesis 14: 17, 18, "Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of God most high, met Abraham at the vale of Shaveh." The note here is, "The same is the king's vale," because in after times this vale was reserved as a garden for the kings of Judah.

In Chapter 23 Sarah is said to have died in "Kirjath Arba," or Arba town; the note is then added, "The same is Hebron." In another place we are told

that Arba was a great chief in his day, so that the town was named after him, but it did not receive the name Hebron till about the times of David.

So in Chapter 28, when Jacob awoke from his dream, we are told, verse 19, that he called the name of the place Bethel, or the House of God, by which name it became famous in after times. But here it is added that "the name of the city was Luz [or almond town] at the first."

In Chapter 35, in verse 19 we read that Rachel died in the way to Ephrath. To this name the note is added, "The same is Bethlehem."

In not one of these passages is there the slightest ground for supposing that these ancient names were afterward forged to give an archaic tone to the book. Ancient romancers felt no need to be particular in their historical references.

The apocryphal book of Judith and Holofernes begins with the sentence, "In the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Nineveh," whereas Nineveh was destroyed before Nebuchadnezzar was born.

We have proved that every book will show where, in place, its author wrote it. Then, if it abounds with historical and biographical details, it will show *when* it was written. In both these respects Genesis affords ample materials for settling all questions. It must have been written by one who was born and who spent his youth in Palestine. As to the time of its composition the evidence is also conclusive that it was written at a very early date. We have already shown how its account of the invasion of Palestine by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, is now accepted, on all hands, as the most important fragment of ancient history.

The third question, next to where and

when, namely, *by whom* this book was written, must always be conjectural while the author's name is not given; but there is one person fully spoken of in the book who would answer all the requirements, and that is Joseph. He was born and spent his youth in Palestine.

He was a most devout and faithful worshiper of the God of his fathers, and one who would treasure up the whole of their story, as no one else would. Meanwhile there has come down to us a papyrus, written by a prime minister of Egypt, from centuries before Joseph's time, in which he says he wrote it for the instruction of his sons. How natural, therefore, that Joseph, himself a prime minister of Egypt, should in his old age compose this remarkable, ancient Book of Genesis for the instruction of his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Chapter XV

THE BOOK OF JOB

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The Book of Job stands wholly by itself among the books of the Bible. We are so accustomed to think and to speak of the Bible as one book that we overlook the fact that it is a great literature instead; composed, no one knows by how many authors, who lived in different centuries and in different countries, who wrote in different languages, or in different ages of the same language; each book differing as a book written in the English of the fifteenth century would differ from an English book written in our century.

By whom the Book of Job was written no one knows, except that he must have

been an Arab who never saw Palestine or ever heard about anything Hebrew. The subject of his book, that of God's dealings with men, inevitably would have led him to speak of the divine interpositions in the story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or of Moses and his laws, but he nowhere refers to them even by implication. Other writers in the Bible do so constantly, because they were themselves all Hebrews. They live in the atmosphere of Palestine or wholly in the thought and associations of Hebrew history. This Job never does.

As to when this book was written, we would be equally ignorant, except for one short reference at the end of the book (to be mentioned later) which shows that he lived in times long anterior to those of Moses.

As to where this book was written, there can be no mistake whatever. The author of this book was himself a great

poet. All admit that. Milton has not been adequately translated into another language. But translated into such a language as that of far-away England, translated, in fact, into all European languages, the Book of Job remains unequaled for the beauty and sublimity of its poetic expression.

No one can describe Nature in her different aspects like a great poet. And this Job does with constant fidelity and vividness. But it is Nature as he saw it and where he saw it, namely, in northern Arabia, and *not* in Palestine. Those two countries differ as much in their natural characteristics as Colorado and Kentucky, and Job never looks upon any scene which does not belong to his own native and peculiar country.

As to climatology: There can be few regions in the world which would illustrate his bitter disappointment with his

friends as does his comparison in Chapter 6:15-20.

My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,
  As the channel of brooks that pass away;
Which are black by reason of the ice,
  And wherein the snow hideth itself:
What time they wax warm they vanish;
  When it is hot they are consumed out of their place.
The caravans that travel by the side of them turn aside;
  They go up into the waste, and perish.
The caravans of Tema looked,
  The companies of Sheba waited for them.
They were put to shame because they had hoped;
  They came thither, and were confounded.

A foreigner would scarcely expect ice to form over night or, in fact, anywhere in the hot deserts of northern Arabia; yet the conditions there are such that the radiation of heat from its stony wastes at night is enough to cause intense cold by morning. My father said that he never so suffered from cold as he did one morning at the foot of Mount Sinai. The morning sun causes every trace of moisture to vanish by noon. This passage graphically describes the dismay of cara-

vans while perishing from thirst, on finding no brooks flowing in the valley, but only hot, dry stones.

So also as to Job's zoology. He mentions among mammals lions, wild goats, deer, wild asses and the aurochs or wild ox, which in ancient times roamed widely both in Asia and in Europe, but which has become extinct. It is striking that he does not mention the bear so often spoken of by writers in Palestine; but bears did not exist in Arabia. No description could be finer than his of the war-horse. (Chapter 39:19.)

In this he shows his Arab blood, for the Hebrews were by Moses forbidden to ride horses, an injunction which, by the way, Solomon violated.

Among birds he mentions ravens, and particularly ostriches, which are unknown in Palestine. He speaks of hawks flying to the south, as they do in Arabia when

returning from following the great migrations of the quails on their way from Africa; and he is very graphic in his description of the eagles in the rocky crags of his land. (Chapter 39:26-30.)

Job is equally characterized by what he mentions or omits to mention in the vegetable world. Thus, the Palestinian writers constantly refer to the great single oaks which are so often connected with the names of places; oaks are not once mentioned in Job, because there are no oaks in Arabia. A Palestinian writer, making poetic allusion to bodily rest, says that a man shall rest under his own vine and fig-tree; but Job never mentions fig-trees, for the good reason that there are no fig-trees in Arabia. The Palestinian writers speak of the woods and forests, but there are neither woods nor forests in Arabia, hence Job never speaks of them. Arabia is a treeless country; Job only names the

sweet flag which is eaten by poor people, and the bulrushes in marshy places.

But tho Job nowhere refers to anything distinctly Palestinian, his allusions to Egypt are numerous. Thus his description of behemoth, or the hippopotamus, is quite picturesque and exact. (Chapter 40: 5.) Not less so is his description of the leviathan, or crocodile. (Chapter 41:1-34.) No writer is so graphic and accurate in his account of this formidable creature.

Still more striking is his description of a mine (Chapter 28:1-11). There is no description of a mine anywhere else in the Bible. He pictures the miner descending far down into the depths of the earth in terms which have been admired by all scholars for their vivid imagery. It should be remembered that the Egyptians carried on vast mining operations in Arabia from the times of the fourth dynasty down.

Likewise he refers to the swift boats made of reeds, which sped over the waters of the Nile. Arabia, in fact, was very early associated with Egypt both in trade and in military operations.

Job is also characterized by his constant references to the social life of his times, and the scenes are always Arabian. His rich men are unmistakable Arabs, and equally so are his poor.

No less specialized is his allusion to the wicked: they are those who rob tents by loosing their cords when they steal there at night. Their evil deeds are invariably those of Arab miscreants. So is every description of the society of their times.

Job's friends, for example, respectfully sit down on witnessing his calamities, and say not a word for seven days. Then each one takes his turn at speaking, and is never interrupted, however irritating his remarks be.

In all ages the Arab race has been noted for its powers of sarcasm, and this Job personally well illustrates. Thus after his friends arraign him for all sorts of hidden transgressions, he answers:

> No doubt but ye are the people,
> And wisdom will die with you.

So does Eliphaz answer Job:

> Should a wise man make answer with vain knowledge,
> And fill himself with the east wind?

Whoever knows of the sirocco, or east wind of Arabia, can fully appreciate how little thirst or hunger can be allayed by it.

As an example of pure irony is his answer to Bildad, who just before had uttered a few commonplace platitudes. (Chapter 26: 1-14.)

> How hast thou helped him that is without power!
> How hast thou saved the arm that hath no strength!
> How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom,
> And plentifully declared sound knowledge!

Job is the only book in the Bible devoted to the discussion of a subject in speculative theology, namely, the dealings

of God in His Providence with men. It opens with a scene in the very court of heaven, when the sons of God—that is, the angels—appear to report their doings to the Almighty. Among those high angelic beings is Satan himself, as if he had a perfect right to be there.

This is the first place in the Bible where Satan is mentioned, but he here appears in his invariable character as the accuser of righteous men. In like manner he appears in Zechariah, Chapter 3:1-7.

It should here be noted that every passage, both in the Old Testament and in the New, which refers to Satan speaks of him as in the court of heaven itself. The only place in which he is represented as cast out of heaven is a prophetic one in Revelation 12:9-10: "And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of

His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night."

The inference is obvious that the presence of Satan in the court of heaven is because God before everything else is the God of law, and if He should forgive the sins and hence the breaking of His law by men, why should he not forgive those of the head of the fallen angels?

The line of argument which Satan is represented as taking is, that the righteousness of Job, that Jehovah praises, was simply mercenary.

"Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face."

So Job is bereft of his family and of property. Failing here, Satan next attacks him in his bodily health.

But Job stands firm and, in his utter darkness and loneliness and bereavement, he gave that answer which rang through the courts of heaven, and which shook to its foundations the throne of the Evil One: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

We have much here that throws light upon the whole subject of angelic beings in the Bible. Owing to the influx of barbarians after the so-called conversion of Constantine, the church adopted purely savage notions about angels; it gave them wings like birds and made them sing. In the Bible there are no winged angels, and they never sing; yet all our hymn-books are filled with references to the unscriptural songs of angels.

If the angels are simply like men in their endowments of mind, and have lived for untold thousands of years, how could they escape having the word "mighty" applied to them? This is the commonest descriptive term of an angel in the Bible. Men who had lived for thousands of years would have such a command of all the forces of nature as, in Job, Satan is represented to have had. More than that, in the New Testament, Satan is represented as having the power of death, and as being the direct agent in the causation of all diseases which afflict our race.

In the Book of Job, Satan appears as the original author of the Utilitarian Theory of Morals. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" is his sneering suggestion to Jehovah. In other words, Job was righteous for pay.

The author then skilfully changes the scene to this world of men.

Job's three friends come ostensibly to condole with him, but they all share in the feeling that God is a paymaster; therefore He would reward the good with prosperity, and the evil with calamity.

Starting with this premise, they at first gently intimate to Job their perplexity at his great misfortunes; and then that he therefore must be a great hypocrite and sinner who has concealed his wrong-doing.

On Job's indignantly repudiating this inference, the dialog proceeds at great length. Job sometimes loses his temper, and seems to ascribe all evil on this earth, as well as all good, directly to God. Ultimately he has much the advantage over his friends in proving by actual facts that God never pays for righteousness, or at best is a very uncertain paymaster.

Yet it is instructive to note that when God Himself appears, He justifies Job as

having spoken the truth about Himself rather than did his three friends. But what is God's line of argument represented to be? Simply that He is too great and too wise to be comprehended by limited men. In other words, God's sovereignty is not to be questioned. This doctrine was exactly suited to the Arab mind, and logically leads to pure fatalism, such as is found in the teachings of the Arab, Mohammed.

A Christian, however, should not lose sight of this original foundation of his religion; namely, the sovereignty of God. Yet in the New Testament this doctrine, while it appears as strongly as ever, yet has back of it the revelation of a God of infinite love.

We close with the only intimation which we have about the times when Job lived. In the last chapter, in the eleventh verse, every man among his relatives and

friends gave him a piece of money and every one a ring of gold and thus made him a rich man again. It would puzzle a modern reader to calculate how many finger-rings would be required to make a man rich; but in the times of the twelfth dynasty of Egypt, 2,500 B.C., we have pictures of men bringing tribute to Pharaoh who were bowed down with the weight of great rings of gold in the scales carried over their shoulders, any one of which rings would be indeed a handsome present. At no other time in Egyptian history was this form of using gold represented on Egyptian monuments.

Lastly, the question how such a foreign book could have been admitted into the canon of Hebrew scriptures receives an adequate explanation when we know that Moses was the son-in-law of Jethro, the priest of Midian. Jethro is represented afterward as often advising Moses upon

the guidance of the Hebrew people. And we can well imagine how such a lofty and majestic description of God would have commended itself to the mind of Moses, as he read the Book of Job in the tents of this priest of the Lord in Midian.

THE END.

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